A

DISCOURSE,

CONCERNING

The Materials, the Manner of Building, and Power of Organizing of the Church of Chriſt; with the true Difference and exact Limits between Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Government; and alſo what are, and what are not juſt Reaſons for Separation.

Together with,

An Addreſs to *Joſeph Fiſh*, A. M. Paſtor of a Church in *Stonington*, occaſioned by his late Piece called *The Examiner Examined.*

BY

ISAAC BACKUS,

Paſtor of a CHURCH in *Middleborough.*

Deſigned to correct what has been amiſs on both Sides, and to point out the Way wherein we ſhould go.

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MDCCLXXIII.

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A

REPLY

TO

Mr. *Joſeph Fiſh.*

ALL muſt allow that to know, the true limits of the church of Chriſt, what are his inſtitutions, and who have a right to them, are matters of no ſmall importance; tho' many have complained, and not without reaſon, that in many of the controverſies about them in our day, the nature of the ſubject has not been ſo cloſely attended to as it ought, but that many things have been introduced which tend to miſlead or perplex the enquiring mind, rather than to enlighten it. And as I ſhall have occaſion before I cloſe this diſcourſe to give the particular reaſons of my writing upon this ſubject, I deſire to refer the reader thereto for his own ſatisfaction, and would proceed directly to the argument in hand.

In 1767 Mr. *Joſeph Fiſh* publiſhed nine ſermons from Mat. 16. 18. in which he tried to prove, that thoſe called *ſtanding churches* in New-England, are built upon the Rock, and from thence

thence to ſhew what great evils they are guilty of who have withdrawn from them. In this proceeding many were ſo fully perſuaded that he had injured both the truth and people of God, that I was prevailed with to publiſh an examination of thoſe ſermons in 1768.

Againſt which Mr. *F.* has endeavoured to vindicate himſelf and his ſermons, in a piece intitled, *The Examiner Examined*, printed 1771; which, for reaſons hereafter to be given, I think expedient to make ſome reply to, under the following heads.

I. Of the *matter* of the goſpel church.

This is the capital point of our diſpute. I concurred with Mr. *F.* that the "Truth which "Peter confeſſed, or the perſon of Chriſt, of "whom this confeſſion is made, is the Rock "upon which Jeſus Chriſt reſolves to build his "church; and that Peter was one of thoſe *lively* "*ſtones*, or precious *materials* of that building." And when he obſerved from Deut. 29. 10, &c. "That children, even infants were always "reckoned a part of that body or church, which "the Lord gathered in Abraham's family," I readily concurred with that alſo; but when he ſaid, "Is it not altogether reaſonable to ſuppoſe "that the Chriſtian church is made up of the "*ſame materials*, that the Jewiſh church was?" my anſwer was, No by no means, becauſe God has ſaid the contrary; to prove which I referred him to Jer. 31. 31, 32. Heb. 8. 5, &c. * Ex. p. 11, 12. Now

* Let the reader obſerve, that through this diſcourſe, Ser. ſtands for Mr. *F*'s Sermons; Ex. for my Examination of them; and only p. with figures, for his laſt piece.

Now in reply Mr. *F.* charges me a number of times with entirely mistaking his meaning, for no better reason that I can see, than only because I dont agree with it. At length he comes to the point in hand, and says if he understands me, he thinks my meaning is, "That the covenant "which God made with Israel when he brought "them up out of Egypt, was the covenant which "took in parents and children, and made them "the *materials* of the Jewish church; but the "new covenant which he would make with "them afterwards is essentially different from "that covenant; and therefore there must be "an essential difference in the materials of the "churches, Jewish and Christian." p. 27.——True, that is my meaning; and what has he produced against it? Why he first tries to reduce it to this absurdity; that I hold the materials of the *visible* church to be all gracious persons, and yet own that hypocrites do sometimes *creep* into it; which consequently puts an end to the distinction between *visible* and *invisible*.

"These, says he, are his sentiments so far as "I can see any thing of his meaning." Yet I did repeatedly answer this very objection, Ex. p. 57, 95. And Mr. *F.* has a remark upon a page in which I observed that, These ministers *confound* the constitution of the Jewish and Christian churches together, and shuffle and shift from one to the other as occasion suits, and then charge us with not distinguishing between the *visible* and *invisible* church. They allow that the invisible church contains none but the *first born which are written in heaven*, Heb. 12. 23. but they would have the visible church contain abundance more;

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and fly to the Jews, to parables, and to hypocrites to ſupport their notions. Whereas the proper notion of viſible is the making *manifeſt* what was before inviſible: hence ſays Paul, *With the heart man believeth, and with the mouth confeſſion is made*; therefore an *outward ſhew* of what is not *inviſibly real*, is *hypocriſy*. The only reaſon why any get into the viſible church who are not born again, is not owing to the *rule*, but to the *imperfection* of men in acting upon it. Hence old Mr. *Shepard*, in anſwer to this queſtion, *Do not hypocrites and no true members of Chriſt* creep in? Says, "Yes; but if they could have "been known to be ſuch they ought to be "KEPT OUT; and when they are known, they "are orderly to be CAST OUT. Mat. 25. 1. 2 "Tim. 3. 5. Rev. 2. 20. Tit. 3. 10." *

Theſe are my words; and I did hope that at leaſt the ſentence of one of our learned fathers who compoſed the *Cambridge* platform, would have had ſome weight with Mr. *F.* but no; that old beaten road muſt be kept, let fathers or children be trampled upon ever ſo much, yea and his eyes are ſo dim that he ſays, "I dont ſee why Mr. *B.* "may not juſt as well ſay of Paul and his "brethren in the miniſtry, as he does of me and "mine:—for who of all writers or preachers, "does ſo much as Paul and the other apoſtles, "at connecting the Jewiſh and Chriſtian churches "together; ſhewing that the latter ſprings out "of the former; or rather, is but a continuation "of the *ſame* church?" p. 116. And are there no means to help our authors eye-ſight? Yes; at

* His ſum of the Chriſtian Religion. p. 25. 26.

at the top of the ſame page he has helped mine, and I cant but hope to requite his kindneſs in the ſame way. I had quoted 2 Tim. 3. 5, but was ſo ſhort-ſighted as to write, THE *form of godlineſs*, inſtead of A *form*. This he corrects, and ſays, "There is THE form of *ſound words*, "which we are to *hold faſt*; and ſo THE form "of divine ſervice which *God* has inſtituted "to be religiouſly obſerved, and not trifled "with. And there is A form of godlineſs "which *man* invents and ſets up, and ſo not "binding to chriſtians, widely different from "THE form which is of God."

I heartly thank Mr. *F.* for this correction, and that for two reaſons; one is becauſe I am glad to get rid of my own miſtakes; the other is becauſe I hope to do him and others good by it, and for that end requeſt attention to the following particulars.

1. THE form of *ſound words*, calls the covenant that conſtituted Abraham's houſehold into a church, *The covenant of circumciſion*. Act. 7. 8. But A form that man has invented calls it, *The covenant of grace*. 2 THE form of ſound words, calls Abraham's two ſons, with the mothers who bare them, an *allegory* of the TWO covenants, one of which the *Jewiſh*, the other the *Chriſtian* church ſtood in. Gal. 4. 22——31. But the words of mans invention, and which Mr. *F.* follows, ſay, "The covenant that made the Jews the "church of God is eſſentially the *ſame* in all "ages," p. 39. 3. The form of ſound words ſhews that circumciſion was a *ſign* of Chriſt's death, and of an inward change, Col 2. 11. and that as Abraham had this change, and by faith

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ſaw and *embraced* * Chriſt *before* circumciſion was inſtituted, it was a *ſeal* of the *faith that he had*, when he was in *uncircumciſion*, Rom. 4. 10, 11. But man's wiſdom aſſerts that it was a *ſeal* to that church in general, tho' it is never called ſo in the ſacred oracles. 4. From Abraham's faith in Chriſt, *before* circumciſion and other rites of the law were appointed, the apoſtle proves that his title to be *heir of the world*, ſo that all believers ſhould be called *his children*, was not thro' the Jewiſh covenant, but a *better* covenant, eſtabliſhed upon *better promiſes*, Rom. 4. 12, 13. Gal. 3. 16, 17. Heb. 8. 6. Yet Mr. *F.* holds both covenants to be eſſentially the ſame. He allows a circumſtantial difference, and that the goſpel diſpenſation is "more ſpiritual, ſimple, and free "from outward ceremonies." p. 35. More *ſpiritual* as to ordinances, but *carnal* as ever in materials; for he declares that "There is no-"thing in the conſtitution of this new covenant, "that neceſſarily requires a *change* of the *materials* of the church." p. 36. Tho' THE form of ſound words, plainly makes ſo great change in the materials, as there is between the children of Abraham's fleſh, and the *children of God*; and tells us that thoſe of his ſeed which the Gentiles were grafted in among, were a *remnant according to the election of grace*; the *reſt* being *broken off* becauſe of *unbelief*, and thoſe who *ſtood*, it was *by faith*, Rom. 9. 8, and 11. 5, 17, 20. Therefore, 5. The greateſt difference between the covenant of circumciſion, that God made with Abraham, and the new covenant which he made with his

* John 8. 56. Heb. 11. 13.

his believing poſterity, lay in the *materials* of the church. The firſt of his ſeed who was circumciſed was an unbeliever; and when that covenant was renewed, and the ordinance of the paſſover was added, in *the day* that Iſrael came out of Egypt, there was alſo a precept given, that when a *ſtranger* would join with that church, *let all his males be circumciſed, and then let him come near and keep it.* Exod. 12. 48. But God ſays, the new covenant with the believing Hebrews, is *not according* to the covenant he made with their fathers *in that day*; and the ſpecial excellency of this new covenant is, that *all ſhall know him from the leaſt to the greateſt.* Heb. 8. 8—11. Here note; Iſhmael did not know God tho' he was thirteen years old when he was conſtituted one of the materials of that church, but it would not have anſwered ſo well, to have placed the oppoſition there, becauſe Abraham had no precept given him to admit *ſtrangers* by *houſholds*; that was given in *the day* they came out of Egypt. So that as I ſaid before, I cannot conceive it poſſible. for words to expreſs more plainly than theſe do, that there is an eſſential difference between the materials, as well as the forms of the two churches.

And what has Mr. *F.* ſaid againſt this? Why he has taken up much time to prove, that the covenant of grace was always the ſame, and that God has brought ſome to know him in all ages (which I never denied) and then he both adds to, and takes from the word of God; and by that time he has got ſo bewildered, as to deny his knowing any thing of what himſelf had tranſcribed juſt above. This you will ſay is very ſtrange.

It is ſo, but no more ſtrange than true. I have already proved that the word of truth calls the covenant which formed Abraham's houſhold into a church, The covenant of circumciſion; but Mr. *F.* takes this away, and *adds* the name *grace* to it, which is not put to it in the bible; and reaſons upon it till he ſays, "As for any expli- "cit act or prohibition, forbidding children to "come (into the chriſtian church with their "believing parents) neither Mr. *B.* nor any "other, that I know of, plead ſuch a bar." p. 36. And yet he had tranſcribed in the ſame page, part of my plea of ſuch a bar, becauſe God *expreſsly* ſays, the new covenant is *not according* to that which he made in *the day* wherein he firſt appointed ſuch a practice. I am very ſenſible that children are freely called to come to Chriſt, and that 'tis a joyful thing to hear them cry, *Hoſanna* to him, which implies *faith* in him as the *Saviour*; but I do plead an explicit prohibition againſt bringing them to baptiſm before they profeſs this faith. For the firſt adminiſtrator of baptiſm expreſsly required, *fruits meet for repentance*, and ſaid to the Jews, *Think not to ſay we have Abraham to our father.* Mat. 3. 8, 9. I am ſenſible that many will here tell us, that this reſpects men's coming upon a *perſonal* right. True it does ſo; but then it is an explicit teſtamony that baptiſm is not a token of the *ſame* covenant that circumciſion was; for that covenant took in all the *men* of Abraham's houſe ſo ſtrictly, that if any one of them remained uncircumciſed, *that ſoul ſhould be cut off from his people.* Gen. 17. 14. Thus the covenant that conſtituted that church, took in all the *men* of Abraham's houſe:

houſe: and as the *men* of his houſe, were thus warned not to *think* of coming to baptiſm upon their *father's* right; and as the Hebrews were expreſsly told, that the new covenant is *not according* to the covenant that was made in *the day* that firſt opened a door for *ſtrangers* to bring their *houſholds* upon their faith; if all this does not lay an explicit bar againſt ſuch a practice, I deſire to know what can lay one?

I ſhall now endeavour to conſider all the force of Mr. *Fiſh's* arguments againſt this point, as diſtinctly as my capacity will admit of.

1. He endeavours to prove that this *new* covenant is ſet in oppoſition to the Sinai law, which neither took in nor caſt out children, and not to Abraham's covenant, which he ſays, "was a pure covenant of grace." p. 29. And that infants, "muſt certainly hold their place in the church, "—unleſs by ſome ſpecial act of God, their pri- "vilege is taken away; which is not to be pro- "duced. Here then appears the *fatal* miſtake "of Mr. *B. fatal* to his cauſe." p. 32. Anſwer, if the taking away the name which the holy Ghoſt has given to that covenant, and adding that of *pure grace* to it; and applying Gal. 3. 17. thereto, in which the apoſtle expreſsly refers to Abraham's juſtification by faith in Chriſt, *before* he took the *bondwoman*, by which he proves that the covenant of circumciſion is now to ceaſe when the *ſeed Chriſt* is come. Gen. 12. 3, and 15. 6. Gal. 3. 6, 8, 16, 17. and 4. 31. If theſe things be duly examined, I believe the *fatal* miſtake will be found to belong to his cauſe, and not mine: for this new covenant is ſet in oppoſition to what was done, in the day they came out of Egypt,

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more directly than to what was done at Sinai, months or years afterward.

2. Mr. *F.* quotes a number of texts out of the old teſtament which ſpeak the language of grace, and then ſays, "I WILL and they SHALL, "was ever the gracious word of God, or form of "his covenant of grace; how then is this a *bet-* "*ter covenant*, eſtabliſhed upon *better promiſes*? "as Mr. *B.* argues." p. 34. Anſwer, I have already obſerved, that the covenant of grace was always the ſame, and the language, *I will* and *they ſhall*, in Abraham's covenant, inſured the continuance of the church in the line of his poſterity, till THE SEED ſhould come *to whom the promiſe was made*. Gal. 3. 19. but then all that believed not in him, were *broken off* from the church of God.

3. Mr. *F.* grants this, but ſtill will have it that the chriſtian diſpenſation preſerves the *ſame materials for kind*, becauſe the new covenant is made with *Iſrael* and *Judah*, p. 37. To which I reply, that I well know the goſpel church was firſt conſtituted of believing Jews; the ſecond covenant was made with them, but then the covenant was *new*, and ſo different from the firſt, that Chriſt *took the firſt out of the way*, *nailing it to his croſs*, that he might *eſtabliſh the ſecond*: and has charged us to *beware* leſt any man, thro' *philoſophy and vain deceit*, ſubject us to *ordinances* from thoſe *rudiments*. Col. 2. 8, 14, 20. Heb. 10. 9.

4. Our author would have it, that the covenant is only circumſtantially and not eſſentially new; to prove which he refers us to the law of *love*, which is eſſentially the ſame in all ages; yet our Lord calls it *new*, becauſe he taught it more plainly, and preſſed it by *new motives*, p. 35.

I fully concur with his premises, but not with his consequence, for this new commandment is so far from being *opposed* to the old, that it is declared to be *the old commandment* which we had *from the beginning*. John 13. 34. 1 John 2. 7, 8. Whereas this new covenant is *not according* to the old one; and the difference is so great that the first of Abraham's sons, and multitudes of those who came after, were in their *sins*, and did not *know God*, when they were taken into covenant, but the subjects of this new covenant *all know him*, and have their *sins forgiven*.

5. Mr. *F.* holds this difference to be only gradual, and says, "In gospel times the blessings "of this new covenant were to issue forth *more* "*abundantly*." p. 35. But I answer, that the subject we are upon is, not the *degree* of things, but the *nature* of the church constitution; for he owns that "'tis the *covenant* that makes the "church *what it is*." p. 39. I must therefore once more turn him to his own corrections, and observe, that THE form of the church which God has appointed says, *They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for* ALL *shall know me, from the* LEAST *to the greatest*. Heb. 8. 11. This is the covenant which Mr. *F.* says, makes the church *what it is*. And who is there that does not know, that the *oracles of God* which were the *chief* privilege of the Jewish church, Rom. 3. 2. were confined so much thereto, that before Christ had taken that covenant away, and nailed it to his cross, he expressly forbid his apostles to preach to any but those who were in it? yet after it was taken away he commanded them to *teach all nations*,

tions, and to *preach the goſpel to every creature*, in order to bring ſuch as were *taught* and *believed*, to baptiſm and into the church. Mat. 10. 5, 6, and 28. 19. Mark 16. 15, 16. So that the greateſt difference between theſe two covenants appears to be, that men muſt have a ſtanding in the firſt, in order to have the free uſe of the means which ordinarily *teach them to know God*; while theſe means in a clearer light, are now freely uſed with all nations, in order to bring them into the ſecond covenant; and that none come into the church aright but ſuch as knew him before. And if any get in beſide ſuch as ſhall be *ſaved*, they do not come in by the *door*, but like *thieves*, *climb up ſome other way*, or *creep in unawares*. John 10. 9. Gal. 2. 4. Jude 4.

Here my opponant tries again to involve me in an abſurdity, and ſays, "Whether they got "in by *creeping*, ſlyly or boldly; thro' the care-"leſneſs of the church, or with their *conſent* and "according to their judgment, it matters not "in the preſent caſe; they are *in the church*: "and ſo 'tis after all but a viſible church, of the "common ſtamp." p. 45. But where will tradition carry men! who ever thought that if a thief has but once got *into the houſe*, that would make void the law that forbids his coming there! and what ſchool is it that will teach, that thoſe who take God's *covenant into their mouths*, if they once *ſee* that a *thief* IS IN, it is "no matter" if they then CONSENT *with him*! Pſalm 50. 16, 18.

However I muſt not forget that our author ſays, I miſtook his meaning. He tells us that his book treats of the church in a *large* ſenſe, but that I take the word in the moſt *limited* ſenſe.

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This he inſiſts much upon. p. 10, 15, 16, 23, 51. To which I reply, that the title of his book is, "The church of Chriſt a firm and durable "houſe:" and his firſt character of it is, "That "Jeſus Chriſt has but ONE church in the world, "and that is the *ſame* which it always was." I obſerved that the *inviſible* church is ſo, but entered my exception againſt its being true of the *viſible* church, which I took notice was what Mr. *F.* intended. Ex. p. 11. and whether the houſe be ſo large as he would make it or not, I thought was the main point of diſpute between us; and to have firſt allowed it to be ſo large, and then to have tried to prove that it was not ſo, is a way that I never learned. Indeed he tells me, that my book "ſufficiently proves" me not to be a *learned* man in their way. p. 126. and he alſo ſays, "Needful accompliſhments of *learning*, "can be judged of by none but ſuch as are *them-* "*ſelves* thus accompliſhed." p. 82. It ſeems then that I muſt refer it to the learned, whether the right way of diſputing be for one to lay down a propoſition, and for another to own it to be truth, and then try to prove that it is not ſo? and whether a *maſter* of *arts* would act in *character* or not, if he declared that the other, "diſputes without an opponant, and talks entirly beſide the purpoſe." p. 16, only becauſe he did not firſt allow that what he diſputes againſt is truth!

Might I be indulged with the common privilege of Engliſh men, to be tried by my equals, I ſhould not much fear the conſequence; for as far as I am acquainted, people in towns endeavour to have their materials ſo *framed*, be-

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fore they are put into the *houſe*, that *every joint* may ſupply its place. * And in new beginnings in the wilderneſs, where they build in the courſeſt manner, I think their materials are all *cut off from their natural ſtock*, † before they are put into the houſe; and if a learned gentleman ſhould tell thoſe new beginners, that they ought to build their houſe ſo *large*, as to take in a good quantity of the *young groth* for future repairs; and one ſhould attempt to convince him of his miſtake, I hardly think the honeſt people would attribute their controverſy to a miſtake about the meaning of the word *houſe*.

I was ſo far from miſtaking his meaning, that I took particular notice, that Mr. *F.* holds thoſe who own the covenant, according to the ſynod in 1662, and all baptized children, to be *members*, ſo as to be under "the faithful authoritative "watch and diſcipline of the church." Tho' I obſerved, that the talk of diſciplining ſuch in our day, was but *empty words*. Ex. p. 104. ‡ But he ſays of that part of my book, that he could not ſee as I had *touched* his arguments with any thing *to the purpoſe*, and therefore paſſes it over. p. 118. So I ſhall leave theſe matters with the reader, and cloſe this head with the following queries.

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* Eph. 2. 21. and 4. 16. Col. 2. 19. † Rom. 11. 24.

‡ His notion of diſciplining ſuch, is to *inſtruct* and *wait* upon them "till their way is cleared" to come up to full communion. Ser. p. 90, 92, but what diſcipline is this, more than may be exerciſed toward thoſe, who are not in the church? Any man in the Jewiſh church who *forbore* to keep the paſſover, unleſs neceſſarily hindered, was to be *cut off from his people* Num. 9. 13. Hence Mr. *F*'s *large* notion of a church, has neither law nor goſpel to ſupport it.

1. Can any person be built upon the Rock who does not *hear* Christ's *sayings and do them*? Mat. 7. 24.

2. Is not this hearing and doing, the same with that *believing* and *confessing* which is *unto salvation*? Rom. 10. 8, 10, 14.

3. Will not our Lord *spue out of his mouth*, every church, and every member that has not this faith and life? Rev. 3. 16.

4. Can Noah, Daniel, Job or any other *father*, deliver any *son* or *daughter* from the *gates of Hell* who have it not? Ezek. 14. 20. If not, then

5. How can any souls be fit *materials* of the church which those gates shall *not prevail against*, but such as *believe* in Christ with *their hearts*, and *confess* him with *their mouths*? This leads us to speak

II. Of the gospel *manner of building* churches.

I know Mr. *F.* says, "I have really nothing "to do with Mr. *B.* upon this head; 'tis out "of the question, as a *particular* church is not "*the church*, which my sermons treat of." p. 51. It may therefore be needful to enquire into the following things.

1. Is any other visible church-state instituted in the gospel, but a particular one? *The church* spoken of by our Lord in Mat. 18. 15,—18, is such an one as a brother can *tell* his grievance to; and whoever thought that could be to any other than a particular community? The seven churches of Asia are spoken to by their great Head, not as one national or provincial church, but as so many distinct churches, who are commended, or reproved by him, according as their *works* were, in each particular community. The church of

Corinth was reproved, for neglecting to *judge* ſuch as were *within*, and not thoſe *without* their particular ſociety. 1 Cor. 5. 12. And if Mr. *F.* was not treating of a particular church, what means his talk of the privilege of the baptized, as being under her authoritive watch and diſcipline? In truth our fathers were not a little puzzled with this queſtion. One of them that concurred with another who had gone before him, in *reſolving* to have an argument able to *remove a mountain*, before he would recede from infant baptiſm; and was *peremptory* for bringing perſons to own the covenant, in order to bring their children to baptiſm, who did not ſee their way clear to come up to full communion; yet he confeſſed himſelf not to be ſo peremptory whether they were baptized as in a *catholic*, or in a *particular* church-ſtate. But after much labour between him and others of great note upon it, they concluded to reſt the matter thus; "That we are "to diſtinguiſh between a particular church, as "it is more *ſtrictly* taken for a *particular corpo-* "*ration* of covenanting believers, entruſted by "our Lord with the keys of the kingdom of "heaven; and as it is more *largely* taken for "that ſpecial part of our Lord's viſible church, "which doth *ſubſiſt* in this or that particular "place." * So that according to them, ſubſiſting in a particular *place* entitled ſuch as would own the covenant to baptiſm and diſcipline, while the power to diſpenſe them belonged to the church more ſtrictly taken.

Mr.

* Mr. Mitchel's life, p. 70, 78. and Dr. Increaſe Mather's life. p. 54.

Mr. *F.* ſays, "This is what our ſeparate "brethren *improperly* called a half-way cove-"nant." Ser. p. 92. If ſo, his learned brethren have now got very openly into the ſame *impropriety*. Dr. *Bellamy* has writen a number of pieces againſt it under that name; and a learned opponent of his ſays, "As to the *half-way* "practice; I am in it, but not for it. I have "no diſpoſition to oppoſe the Dr. in his endea-"vouring to break up that *unſcriptural practice*; "provided he will take the right courſe." * The courſe that he would have taken to break up that practice, is for miniſters not to require perſons to profeſs a *gracious ſtate* in order to come to the Lord's-ſupper; which brings us,

2. To enquire whether perſons ought to profeſs ſaving faith when they come into the church or not? Dr. *Owen* ſays, "We deſire no more "to conſtitute *church members*, and we can deſire "no leſs than what in a judgment of charity "may comply with the *union* that is between "Chriſt the Head and the church, 1 Cor. 12. 27. "Eph. 2. 22. 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. 2 Cor. 11. 1, "18. 1 Theſ. 1. 1. &c. that may in the ſame "judgment anſwer the way of the beginning "and increaſe of the church according to the "will of God, who adds unto the church ſuch "as ſhall be *ſaved*. Acts 2. 47. the rule of our "receiving of them being *becauſe he hath receiv-"ed them*, Rom. 14. 1, 2. that may anſwer that "profeſſion of faith which was the *foundation* of "the church, which was not what *fleſh and blood*, "but

* Mr. Moſes Mather's ſecond piece on the covenant; printed at New-Haven 1770, p. 78.

" but what *God himſelf revealed*, Mat. 16. 16." * The laſt of theſe ſcriptures is connected with Mr. *Fiſh's* text. To which I ſhall only add, that, tho' ſome in our day would have it, that believing with *all the heart*, which was required of the Eunuch in order for baptiſm, meant ſomething ſhort of ſaving faith; yet Paul ſays, If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy *mouth* the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt *believe in thine heart*, that God raiſed him from the dead, thou *ſhalt be ſaved*. Rom. 10. 9. Note, he that believes *in his heart, ſhall be ſaved*; how daring then is it for any to argue that, a believing with *all the heart*, can mean any lower kind of faith!

3. How is this faith to be confeſſed? The foregoing ſcriptures and many more ſhew, that it was with the *mouth* or verbally; tho' many would have it to be general and not particular: to prove which the Eunuch's declaration is ſometimes produced. Not obſerving, that Philip had immediate teaching from heaven to go to him, and got well acquainted with his ſoul-exerciſes before this confeſſion; nor the vaſt difference there is between ſaying, *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God*, now when a man would expoſe himſelf in the world to ſay the contrary; to what it was then, when that truth was ſo much denied. Saints are often called God's witneſſes; and who does not know, that the general teſtimony from ſuch is not ordinarily enough, but men want to hear in particular, how they

* His nature of a goſpel church, p. 14. The ſame author elſewhere largely proves, that no other church-ſtate was inſtituted by Chriſt, but a *particular* one. See his original of evangelical churches. p. 61, 67, 136.

they came to the knowledge of what they teſtify? Hence, tho' Peter had immediate direction from above to go to Cornelius, yet when he came he would have from *his mouth* an account how he came to ſend for him. And when the church at Jeruſalem wanted ſatisfaction of Peter about that matter, he did not turn them off with a general declaration, that the holy Ghoſt ſent him, and owned him; tho' he had a much better claim to be credited by that church, than common perſons now have to be credited by a church they would join with: but inſtead of turning them off with generals, Peter *rehearſed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them.* Acts 11. 4. And as our Lord has commanded his diſciples, not to give *holy things* to unholy creatures, and to *beware* of falſe prophets, ſaying, *ye ſhall know them by their fruits.* Mat. 7. 6, 15, 16. ſo he has explained thoſe fruits to be, what is *brought forth* out of the *heart* by *ſpeaking*. Luk. 6. 45. and John ſays, *That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us.* And do not theſe things ſufficiently prove that the goſpel method of profeſſing our faith, is by a particular declaring of it with our mouths?

4. To whom is the declaration to be made? Mr. *F.* refers us to a clauſe in Cambridge platform where they ſay, in caſe of "exceſſive fear,— "'tis ſufficient that the *elders*, having received "*private* ſatisfaction, make relation thereof in "public before the church." p. 51. But as he had ſpent the four preceding pages, in trying to prove that one of our fathers "worſt miſtakes,"

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was their allowing the brotherhood too much power; I believe I ought to be allowed a little room here to prove, that in this case they did not allow them enough. For there is no point more expressly forbidden by our Lord, than for ministers to assume a power *like civil rulers*. Mat. 20. 25—27. Mark 10. 42—44. Luke 22. 25—27. * Yet where are the civil judges that are allowed the power to examine witnesses in *private*, and then to read or relate their testimony in public, without giving full liberty to all who are concerned, to hear and examine the witnesses themselves! Will "excessive fear" excuse witnesses in earthly courts?

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* "All the pleas of the Romanists are utterly insufficient to "secure their papal dominion from this sword of the mouth of "the Lord Jesus; for, whereas their utmost pretence and "defence consists in this, That it is not dominion and power *absolutely* that is forbidden, but the *unlawful, tyrannical, oppressive* exercise of power;---never was there any "dominion in the world, more cruel,---than that of the "Popes hath been. But it is evident, that our Lord doth "not in the least reflect on the rule or government of the "Kings and Princes of the gentiles.------He speaks of "*them* in an especial manner, whom their subjects, for "their moderate and equal rule, called *benefactors*. And "such a power or preheminence it was,----that the two "disciples desired in *his kingdom*, which gave occasion to "this declaration.---He will have,---no *courts*, no *coercive* "*jurisdiction*;---for by these means do the Princes of the "gentiles, those that are the *benefactors* of their countries, "rule among them. And this is most evident from what "in opposition hereunto he prescribes unto his own disciples, the greatest, and best in office, grace and gifts; "namely a *ministry* only, to be discharged in the way of "*service*. How well this great command and direction "of our Lord Jesus hath been and is complied withal, "by those who have taken on them to be rulers in the "church, is sufficiently known."

Dr. Owen's nature of a gospel church. p. 29, 30.

courts? if not, what a ſhame is it to pretend that any are fit to be received as God's witneſſes, who can't tell before their brethren ſomething of what they know concerning the truth and love! As to a relation of experiences, before all the congregation, which was our fathers common practice, and is often of great benefit; yet I inſiſt not on that for every one; but before the church I think none ought to be received without it. In the epiſtle to *all the ſaints* at Rome, members as well as officers, they were required to *receive* him that was *in the faith* tho' *weak*; and to *receive one another* as Chriſt received them. Rom. 1. 7. and 14. 1. and 15. 7. And how can that be done without hearing of them? yet don't miſtake me; what I plead for a relation of (as preſident *Edwards* ſaid) are the great things wherein godlineſs conſiſts, and not the perſons opinion of his own good eſtate. * We come,

III. To conſider of the goſpel method of *organizing* churches. Our

* Should any here object, that Mr. *Edwards* was againſt the cuſtom I plead for; I reply, that I know he ſeems to ſay much againſt it, particularly in his diſcourſe on the *affections*; tho' I think he does not pretend to bring any ſcripture againſt it; but only that he did not ſee full proof for it; therefore if I have brought proof for it, he has nothing againſt that. What he chiefly appeared againſt, was the tying perſons up to one particular order of experience; and alſo a being taken with ſome ſtriking words in their declaration, without due regard to the whole nature of it, and likewiſe to their life and converſation. And herein I am full in his ſentiments; and would intreat all, not to be taken with, or to judge according to *appearance*, but to judge *righteous judgment*. Yet after all Mr. *Edwards* was ſo far from excluding the telling of experience, that he expreſsly requires it, in candidates for the miniſtry.

Treatiſe on the affections, p. 301, 302.

Our author in his ſermons tells us, that Chriſt did not go to colleges or ſchools of learning for his firſt miniſters, but that they whom he took into his ſchool, were chiefly *unlearned* and *ignorant* men; to whom in a little time, he gave ſuch a meaſure of knowledge, learning, and grace, as abundantly qualified them for the great work, whereto he appointed them. Yet now ſince the canon of ſcripture is compleated, he ſays, "It "muſt be but a fond conceit, a remark without "reaſon, judgment or truth—to ſay, The Lord "is now raiſing up and ſending forth,—unlearn-"ed and ignorant men." And he repreſents all ſuch as going "without any warrant or call "from the King of Zion," and compares them to *Sceva*'s ſons. Acts 19. 15, 16.

But of them that are furniſhed with *knowledge* and *underſtanding*, he ſays, "Such men being "found, and preſenting *themſelves*, with a hum-"ble and ſerious *deſire* to engage in the work "(1 Tim. 3. 1.) the apoſtle farther directs and "charges, that they ſhall have the work of the "*miniſtry committed* to them by authorized hands, "even by *officers* already in the church." &c. In reference to which, as I came acroſs his uſe of the word extraordinary in another caſe, I inſerted a note upon the great things that were done by that word, and ſaid, "The power of Chriſt in "*qualifying* men for the miniſtry, without going "to colleges for them, is hereby limitted to the "apoſtles days; and all are rejected with con-"tempt by Mr. *F.* who do not receive their *gifts* at "*college*, and their *authority* from *authorized* "hands, p. 15—17, and theſe authorized hands, "by the help of this word have got ſuch an

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" *extraordinary* power as the apoſtles never " had. For the apoſtles were only *witneſſes* for " Chriſt, and as ſuch pointed out to the church, " what qualifications officers ſhould have, and " ſaid, *Brethren look ye out among you* ſuch men. " Acts 1. 8. and 6. 3. But theſe pretended ſuc- " ceſſors of the apoſtles, aſſume a power to limit " the church, in her choice to ſuch as they have " *approbated*; which I truſt will be made evident " to be a power which the apoſtles never had." Ex. p. 24, 25.

The reader may note, that here I ſpake of the qualifying, approbating, and choice of officers; but Mr. *F.* paſſes over what I *ſaid*, and preſumes to tell what I *meant*: for he ſays, " 'tis " evident Mr. *B.* there means a power of or- " daining officers in the church." And ſo fixing upon what I neither ſaid nor meant in that place, he accuſes me with " keeping back the " principal words in the text, as it relates to the " preſent queſtion:" and with affirming that the apoſtles, " never had *power* to ordain;"— with a " preſumptuous handling of the holy " ſcriptures, and a daring corrupting of the " ſenſe of them," &c. p. 65, 66. The way he takes to try to prove that I meant what I did not expreſs, is to tell the reader that I refer to a page in his book that treats of ordination; as if I had referred to but one page; whereas my reference was exactly as I have now laid it before the reader, who will judge whether I have injured the truth or not, ſince the apoſtles only deſcribed what thoſe officers qualifications and work ſhould be, and then called the church to *look them out*; and the church did ſo, and *they* ſet

thoſe whom they had looked out, *before* the apoſtles. But the modern method is, for ſuch as *deſire* to be miniſters, *humbly* to *preſent themſelves* before officers to be approbated; and the church is limited, in her choice of miniſters, to ſuch candidates.

This Mr. *F.* cannot deny, but after ſaying much upon it, he comes to theſe words; "Al- "though we think the affair of examination "and judging of the qualifications of candidates "for the miniſtry, is committed to the *miniſters*, "by the Head of the churches, yet we neither "arrogate it *wholly* to ourſelves, as Mr. *B.* char- "ges, i. e. ſo as to exclude the people from try- "ing and judging and chooſing for themſelves; "nor do we ever pretend to *impoſe* upon *them*, "thoſe whom we examine and approbate." p. 82. Reply: What I charged them with, he is here forced to own; and though his mind was ſo intent upon miniſterial power, as not to mention the churches choice, in the page which he ſays treats of ordination, yet I did not ſuppoſe that he excluded the people from a choice among their candidates; and to ſay I charge them therewith, is what I deny, and let him prove it if he can. This art of ſlipping in ſomething which does not belong to the caſe in hand, to prevent its appearing in its true light, is a dreadful part of the *learning* of our world. Not only ſo, but he has alſo proved himſelf *inexcuſably* guilty of the *ſame thing* that he unjuſtly charged upon me; namely, of keeping back principal words of ſcripture, on which the preſent queſtion depended. For when I produced our Lord's commendation of the church of Epheſus,

ſus, Rev. 2. to prove that it is the churches work to *try miniſters*, Mr. *F.* ſays, "Theſe words "were ſpoken *to* and *of* the *angel* or *miniſter* of "the church." p. 81. And keeps back thoſe important words, that the epiſtle is, *What the* SPIRIT *ſaith* UNTO THE CHURCHES. What a "daring and manifeſt corrupting of the holy "ſcripture is here!

So when I obſerved that in Paul's day, letters of commendation were *to* and *from the church*; but proved that ſome miniſters in our land claim a power like civil rulers, contrary to the expreſs command of Chriſt, and then ſaid, If miniſters would leave their *worldly* compariſons, and attend wholly to divine rule, I believe they would find that it belongs to the church *with* them to try miniſters. Ex. p. 40, 41. Yet Mr. *F.* takes much pains to make the reader believe that I don't hold ſo, and at laſt ſays of the Corinthian church, "If letters of commendation went *from* "them or came *to* them, 'twill be hard for Mr. "*B.* to prove that the *brotherhood* and *not* the "*miniſters*, gave and received them" p. 83. I was ſo far from ſaying *Not* the miniſters, that I ſaid The church *with* them; and if men under a pretence of learning may thus change our words from *with* to *not*, what will they not do to ſerve their own turn!

From approbation we now come to ordination; and I obſerve that the grand point wherein he accuſes me with perverting ſcripture is my ſaying the apoſtles were only *witneſſes*; "which (ſays he) "every one knows are perſons that act in a very "different character from thoſe who *appoint*, *ſet*

"and

" and *fix* in a ſtation or office." p. 66. Anſwer 1. It is ſo in earthly ſtates; tho' by the way, 'tis as well known, that in ſuch ſtates all office-power is originally derived from the people; and in the Maſſachuſetts, if not in other provinces, common towns have power, when they have elected their officers, to inveſt them therewith, by their moderators giving them their oaths, before the meeting is diſſolved; and would he place the church of Chriſt beneath our common towns?

Anſwer 2. Our Lord himſelf told his apoſtles, that they ſhould receive *power*, after the holy Ghoſt came upon them; and that they ſhould be *witneſſes* unto him, both in Jeruſalem, and unto the uttermoſt part of the earth. Acts 1. 8. And in after times he ſpeaks of giving *power* unto his *witneſſes*, and they ſhall propheſy. Rev. 11. 3, 6. Therefore let our author and others conſider well, where men have got to, who plead for *power* to " act in a *character* very different from" that which the Son of God gave to his apoſtles, and to later miniſters. The gift of God which Timothy received by the putting on of Paul's hands, and which he was called to *ſtir up*, was *not the ſpirit of fear, but of* POWER, *and of* LOVE, *and of a* SOUND MIND. A *power* to keep him from being *aſhamed of the* TESTIMONY *of our Lord*, or of his ſuffering ſervants. A power to *hold faſt the form of ſound words in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, at a time when many *turned away* from that cauſe. 2 Tim. 1. 6—8, 13—15. This power keeps Chriſt's miniſters from *fainting*, and enables them to *renounce the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in* CRAFTINESS, *nor handling the word of God* DECEITFULLY, *but by manifeſta-*

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tion of the TRUTH, *commending themſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.* And any miniſter who has not a meaſure of this *power*, if he could have as many biſhops or preſbyters, to lay their hands upon him, as could ſtand betwixt here and Jeruſalem, they could not make it the duty of any ſoul to obey him as a miniſter of Chriſt. What we are called to is to *obey the truth*; and ſo far as miniſters hold forth the truth by word and example, it is an important duty to obey and follow them; yea to eſteem them highly in love for their *works ſake*. Gal. 3. 1. Phil. 3. 17. 1 Theſ. 5. 12, 13. Heb. 13. 7, 17. And thoſe who *deſpiſe* ſuch, deſpiſe him that ſent them. Luke 10. 16.

But to have men's *perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage* is an evil way; even tho' it were the perſon of an *apoſtle* or an *angel from heaven*. Gal. 1. 9. Jude 16. And as all true religion has its ſeat in the hearts and conſciences of men, from whence it flows out into their lives and conduct; ſo Joſhua when he had laid open the truth to Iſrael, ſaid, if it ſeems evil *unto you* to ſerve the Lord, *chooſe you this day whom you will ſerve*. And Jeſus Chriſt ſaid to the Jews, *Why even of yourſelves judge ye not what is right*. And Paul ſaid to the Chriſtians, *I ſpeak as to wiſe men, judge ye what I ſay*. Hence it is referred to every conſcience, whether we can juſtly view the apoſtles in any other light, than as being Chriſt's *witneſſes* and the *churches ſervants*. 2 Cor. 4. 5. pointing out to the church what was to be done; who having choſen their officers, and ſet them before them, that the apoſtles in conſequence of the churches act, laid hands on them, and were

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the churches mouth to heaven for a bleſſing on ſaid officers. I think this idea is confirmed by what Peter ſays of himſelf; for when writing to elders, he ſtiles himſelf alſo an *elder*, and a *witneſs* of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and a *partaker* of the glory that ſhall be revealed. From whence he exhorts the elders of churches, to feed the flock of God, taking the overſight thereof, not by conſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither *as being lords* over God's heritage, but being *enſamples* of the flock.

Now you may remember that Dr. *Owen* (as quoted a little back) tells us, that the utmoſt pretence and defence of the Romaniſts, to ſecure their dominion is, That it is not dominion abſolutely that is forbidden, but the *unlawful tyranical* exerciſe of power. And I before referred Mr. *F.* to one of his brethren in the ſame county with him, and a truſtee of one of the colleges, that he would limit Chriſt's church to for miniſters, who aſſerts, that the rights conveyed by the keys, and belonging to the *elderſhip only*, are "As diſtinct as the rights of a magiſtrate are "from thoſe of a private freeman, in a civil "community. Theſe rights are connected "*with*, and inherent *in* the *office* of the elder-"ſhip.—The expreſs charge given them, not to "*lord* it over God's heritage, ſuppoſeth them "to have ſuch rights and powers *above*, *over*, "and diſtinct *from*, and independant *of* the "church.—For—'tis not poſſible they ſhould be "in danger of *abuſing* a power they never "had." * Which ſhews us, that all the difference

* A ſecond letter upon lay-ordination, by Mr. George Beckwith of Lyme. Printed 1766. p. 58, 59.

rence between Roman catholics, and ſome New-England preſbyterians, as to their pleas for power is, The catholic pleads that the ſcripture forbids, only their *tyranical uſe* of lordly power; and the preſbyterian pleads that what is forbidden is the *abuſe* of it. And according to both, Peter miſtook the caſe when he ſaid, Not *as lords*; for he ought to have ſaid, Not *as tyrants*! and ſo they are the reverſe of the apoſtles, who ſpake not in the *words* which *man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the holy Ghoſt teacheth*; comparing *ſpiritual with ſpiritual*. 1 Cor. 2. 13. For theſe late pleaders for power, ſpeak not in the *words* which the *holy Ghoſt* teacheth, but in thoſe which man's wiſdom teacheth; comparing Chriſt's *heavenly* kingdom to *earthly* ſtates, directly in the face of his word.

Our author imagines that as our excellent fathers, "had indeed felt the ſeverities of a uſurped power at home, the power of the clergy, "it endangered the other extreme.—Here they "abate to themſelves the *power* which Chriſt "their Lord had given them, in the point of "ordination." p. 46. But when all is ſaid and done, can it be more certain that three and two make five, than it is, that if the power of ordination is only in officers, then he muſt have an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of ſuch ordinations, down from the apoſtles, or elſe he has not a right ordination himſelf? To try to cover the matter with *don't knows* is to go back into the church which holds *ignorance* as the mother of devotion. As in the jewiſh church the prieſthood was limited to one line, ſo I produced an inſtance, of ſuch as the ſacred hiſtorian allows to be children of the

prieſts;

prieſts; yet becauſe they could not *find* the *regiſter* of their *genealogy*, they were *as polluted, put from the prieſthood.* Ezra 2. 62. which I thought was to the point in hand; but Mr. *F.* ſtarts off, and will not own that he held forth an uninterrupted line; only that Chriſt has always ſupplied his church with able miniſters according to his promiſe (and who denied that?) Then from an old book he mentions the names of ſome in each century; and I obſerve that *baptiſts* miniſters will do as well as any, if people do not know them to be ſuch. For in the 12th century, beſide others he ſays, "Were *Peter Bruis* and his ſcholar *Henry* of Tholouſe, two famous preachers "againſt popiſh errors." p. 25. So it ſeems, and one of thoſe popiſh errors was infant baptiſm; for Dr. *Wall*, one of their greateſt writers for that practice, ſay of theſe two men, that they were, "The firſt *antipedobaptiſts* preachers, that "ever ſet up a church, or ſociety of men, holding "that opinion againſt infant baptiſm, and *re-* "*baptized* ſuch as had been baptized in infancy." * Yet many of our miniſters even to this day, will dare to tell their people, That the firſt baptiſts in the world, were thoſe of Munſter, four hundred years afterward!

To ſum up this matter; if Mr. *F.* has not a *regiſter* to ſhew, of an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of miniſterial ordinations clear from the apoſtles, I leave him and all to conſider, whether, according

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* Dr. Wall's hiſtory of infant baptiſm, part II. p. 184. Vide Gill's anſwer to Dickinſon, p. 32. By the ſame authority we find, that *Gerhardus* and *Dulcinus*, whom Mr. *F.* calls, Two famous preachers in the 13th century, were likewiſe baptiſts.

ing to the plain ſcripture example which ash, been produced, he ought not, either as *polluted* to be put from the miniſtry, or elſe own himſelf to have been unjuſt in blaming, both our fathers and us, for holding the power of ordination to be in the church? I proceed to conſider

IV. Of the difference between civil and eccleſiaſtical government.

In opening the conſtitution of thoſe which Mr. *F.* calls ſtanding churches, I produced many facts, to ſhew how civil and eccleſiaſtical affairs have been confounded together in our country; which has done amazing miſchief, and was the worſt miſtake that our fathers brought to this land. I fully declared *for* a *harmony* between the church and ſtate, but *againſt ſuch a union* between them, as has been practiſed among us. Ex. p. 23.

In reply Mr. *F.* blames me much for not letting theſe matters reſt as our fathers had left them, while yet he has not the courage to juſtify all their conduct, nor to run the line, or fix the bound between the two powers, better than they did; and ſays, "This is too delicate an affair "for me to attempt." p. 56. Then he goes on to prove, what I never in the leaſt denied, that the Jewiſh church and ſtate were united, while yet their acts as to civil polity, and religious worſhip, were kept diſtinct. p. 56, 57. Yet from this and ſome other things he tries to confute, or elſe to confound me.

Two things therefore appear neceſſary here to be conſidered; which are, how the civil rulers in Iſrael did behave toward the church, and what the difference is betwixt us and them.

First, how did Israel's civil rulers behave toward the church? This may be answered in two branches.

1. As to a place and furniture for worship. Tho' their great Lawgiver could, had he seen fit, as exactly have proportioned each man's part of the expence, as to have given the *pattern* of what was to be made; yet instead of that, after giving notice of what was wanted, he said, Whosoever is of a *willing* heart, let *him bring an Offring unto the Lord*, gold, silver, &c. Exod. 35. 5. And when their costly temple was to be built, David like a *nursing father*, led the way, and of his *own proper goods*, offered very largely; and then exhorted his people to do the like; which had such effect, as caused him with grateful wonder to say, "As for me in the uprightness of "my heart I have *willingly* offered all these "things; and now have I seen with joy, thy "people which are present here, to offer *willingly* "*unto thee.*" 1 Chron. 29. 3, 17.

Who can fail to observe, that here it appears, both in the provision that was made for the tabernacle, and for the temple, that what was done was *offered to the Lord*, and that, as each one found a *willing heart*, without any prescribing or compelling in either case? Indeed half a shekel was prescribed for each man to offer, to make attonement for his soul, in which the rich should not give more, nor the poor less. Exod. 30. 15. Importing that all souls are of equal value; which money was for the service of the tabernacle. And when the temple needed repairing in after times, the king said to the priests, all this money, and all the money that *cometh into*

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any mans heart to bring into the houſe of the Lord, let the prieſts take it, every man of his acquaintance, and let them repair the breaches of the houſe. 2 Kings, 12. 4, 5. But they being negligent of their duty, the king reproved them for it; and at his commandment they prepared a cheſt, and ſat it in the gate of the houſe, and made a *proclamation* through Judah and Jeruſalem, to *bring in to the Lord* the collection that Moſes commanded. And *all the princes*, and *all the people rejoiced*, and *brought in* and *caſt into the cheſt in abundance*. 2 Chron. 24. 6, 8—11. This was their method, as to the place of worſhip; and

2. Concerning the ſupport of thoſe who miniſtred in it; we find that the great land-lord and proprietor of all things, enjoined it upon Iſrael, to offer him the firſt fruits, and alſo the tenth of all their increaſe, to be a proviſion for his miniſters, for the ſtranger, fatherleſs and widow; which they were to offer as they would expect a continuance, and a *bleſſing* on his land. Levit. 18. 9—13. Deut. 26. 1—15. Thoſe alſo who miniſtred at the altar, were to partake with it. Levit. 6. 16—26. 1 Cor. 9. 13.

And we find in the reformation in Hezekiah's time, that he firſt ſtired up thoſe miniſters to their duty, and then the people to give them their *portion*, that they might be *encouraged* in their work; and as ſoon as his commandment came abroad, the children of Iſarel *brought in abundance*. 2 Chron. 31. 2—5. And after the Jews return from captivity, they were very particular in their covenant concerning theſe matters; and when they neglected to act accordingly, Nehemiah contended with them, and ſtirred them

up

up to their duty. Neh. 10. 32—39. and 13. 10—12. Afterwards the Lord by his prophet, charged them with *robbing* him in these things, and declares that he had *cursed* the whole nation therefor: but calls them to *return* unto him, and *bring in* the *stores* so that their might be *meat* in his house, and to prove him therewith, if he would not pour them out such a *blessing*, that they should not have room enough to receive it. Mal. 3. 7—10. All which very clearly shew, that both rulers and prophets, endeavoured each in their place, to stir up the priests and Levites to do their duty in the house of God, and to stir up the people to do their part, both toward his house, and towards those who ministred therein; but I cannot find that rulers were ever allowed, much less required, to use any *force* to bring any to it. We have many accounts of their inflicting corporal punishments in other affairs, but not in this.

Secondly, What is the difference between the Jewish state and ours? I answer

1. The laws of their state, were made by infallible authority; ours are but the *ordinances* of fallible *men*. 1 Pet. 2. 13.

2. As God was the King of that state, idolatry was treason against him as such; hence his laws were most strict, that if a brother, the wife of their bosom, or a friend that was as their *own soul*, should secretly entice them to serve *other gods*, they should not only refuse to consent; but says God, *Thou shalt surely kill him*. And if they found that one of their cities had thus turned away, he says, Thou shalt surely *smite* the inhabitants of that city with the *edge of the sword*. Deut.

Deut. 13. 6, 9—15. But the King of Zion ſays, *My Kingdom is not of this world*; which he gave as the reaſon why his ſervants ſhould not *fight*, to prevent his being delivered into the hands of his enemies. John 18. 36. And his laws allow of ſome ſort of *company* with *idolaters* of this *world*; and if a *brother* in the *church* be found guilty of this crime, chriſtians are only required to come out and be *ſeparate from ſuch company*. 1 Cor. 5. 10, 11. 2 Cor. 6. 17.

3. If Iſrael would ſet up a king over them, it muſt be from *among their brethren*, and ſays God, Thou mayeſt not ſet a *ſtranger* over thee, which is *not thy brother*. Deut. 17. 15. But it was in obedience to a decree from Cæſar, (a *ſtranger* and an *idolater*) that Joſeph with Mary came to Bethlehem, when Jeſus was born, Luke 2. 1, 7. And when the Jews aſked Jeſus, if it was *lawful* to give *tribute* to ſuch a ruler? his anſwer was, Render unto Cæſar, the things which are Cæſars; and unto God, the things that are Gods. Mat. 22. 21. And his goſpel expreſsly allows, the *ſword to execute wrath* upon evil doers, in civil ſtates. Rom. 13. 4. Whereas the foundation and ſupport of Chriſt's Kingdom is TRUTH. John 18. 36, 37. And tho' his ſervants walk *in the fleſh*, yet they are *not to war after the fleſh*; for their *weapons are not carnal*. 2 Cor. 10. 3, 4. Were this difference between church and ſtate juſtly viewed, it would obviate the objection that ſome make, againſt any uſe of the carnal weapon at all, as well as prevent others abuſing of it about religion as many do: For,

4. In the Jewiſh ſtate the *prieſts* ſentence had ſuch power, that by it men were *ſhut up*, or ſet at *liberty*;

liberty; and such as he pronounced *utterly unclean*, must be had away *without the camp*. Levit. 13. 1—46. And by his sentence a man might dwell in his own house or not; yea by it, a house must be *broken down*, and its materials carried *without the city*. Levit. 14. 44, 45. And their power went so far as to *thrust a king* out of the temple when he appeared to be *unclean*. 2 Chron. 26. 20. But what awful tyranny, yea hellish cruelty, has been practised under the christian name, by the *priestcraft* of those who have *confounded* the Jewish and christian constitutions together! Tho' if we view them in their distinct light; the high priest was an evident type of Him who has the *key* of David, that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth. Rev. 3. 7. And the other priests were types of the *lively* materials of which his *house is built*. 1 Pet. 2. 5. And by the sentence of our great high priest, a *house* or church, which will not be *cleansed* or reformed, is taken down or *removed out of its place*. Rev. 2. 5. And by the same power will our earthly *tabernacle* be *dissolved*. 2 Cor. 5. 1—4.

And as the apostles were inspired to publish his gospel, they restored to *men* the *key of knowledge* which blind guides had *taken away*. Mat. 23. 13. Luke. 11. 52. And were instruments of opening a *door of faith* unto the gentiles. Acts 14. 27. And by the same authority they gave rules for receiving members into Christ's church; and by his *power* the *church* of God at Corinth, *called to be saints*, were required, when they were *gathered together*, to *put away from amongst themselves* a wicked person. 1 Cor. 1. 2. and 5. 4, 13.

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and their obedience thereto was a puniſhment *inflicted of many*. 2 Cor. 2. 6. And not a word of its being a work done only by officers. *Diotrephes* who aſſumed ſuch a power to himſelf, when an apoſtle wrote *unto the church*; his *prating* and *malice* therein is expoſed, for a warning to all after ages. 3 John 9. 10.

Miniſters, as diſtinct from other ſaints, are never called prieſts in the new-teſtament; therefore the power of the ancient prieſts to govern in the houſe of God, is an argument for, and not againſt the government of Chriſt's houſe, being in the church as a body. In all civil governments, from the greateſt empires to our common families, ſome have power to *judge for others*, which power others ought to *ſubmit to*; but our Lord has moſt plainly forbidden, either the aſſuming or ſubmitting to any ſuch thing in religion. Luke 22. 25—27. Truth is ever to be ſubmitted to, tho' bad men deliver it; but we are forbidden to call any man on earth *maſter* or *father*. Mat. 23. 1—9. Miniſters ſhould be *burning and ſhining lights*, and rule the church as the ſun *rules the day*, by holding forth *light* and *heat*, to direct and quicken men in their walk and work. This is to be done by word and and example. Mat. 5. 14—16. Heb. 13. 7, 8, 17. And dreadful will be the caſe of all ſouls who diſobey ſuch rule and influence; but even women are called to *look to it*, that they *receive not* ANY teacher of a contrary character, as they would eſcape a *partaking of his evil deeds*. 2 John 8. 11.

Once more,

5. The ſame birth that brought a Jew into the *world*, brought him alſo into the *church*, even ſo

ſo that if a conformity to its ordinances was *neglected*, he muſt be *cut off from his people*. Gen. 17. 14. Num. 9. 13. And if he or a ſtranger blaſphemed God's name or committed adultry, they muſt *ſurely be put to death*. Levit. 20. 10, 11. and 24. 16. But the goſpel only requires excommunication for ſuch crimes, if impenitent, and forgives and receives ſuch perſons, when penitent. Mat. 12. 31. John 8. 11. 1 Cor. 5. 1. 2 Cor. 2. 7. 1 Tim. 1. 13, 20. And though Chriſt ſows nothing but good ſeed where ever his goſpel comes, yet he knew how the devil would do the contrary; and alſo how his own ſervants would be in danger of acting toward the *tares*, the children of the *wicked one*, when they *appeared* among *his children*; therefore he ſtated this caſe in a parable, and then explained it to his diſciples, to let them know, that the order of the *kingdom of heaven* is, to let *both grow together* in the *world* till the end of it. Mat. 13. 24—30, 37—39. Yet how dreadfully have theſe orders been violated in our land!

I produced many inſtances of violent methods that were taken, with ſuch as would not conform to, nor ſupport the *pariſh miniſters*. Mr. *F.* now ſays, It is quite injurious for me to charge theſe things upon *miniſters* or *churches*; and ſays, "Whether thoſe proſecutions he ſpeaks of, were "*fact*, or if *fact*, whether *right* or not (which is "not my buſineſs here to determine) it matters "not in the preſent caſe: 'tis evident they are "the doings of the *civil authority*, and of that "ALONE." P. 56, 59.

On which I would remark 1. That miniſters influence in thoſe affairs is too well known, by

rulers

rulers and people, to admit this aſſertion for truth.

2. What Mr. *F.* has diſcovered thro' his book, leaves no room to think that he would have left theſe *facts* undiſputed, if he could have found any ground to diſpute upon.

3. If it was not his buſineſs to have endeavoured to determine whether thoſe proſecutions were *right* or not, what buſineſs had he to blame me for expoſing them? Nay, he does try to juſtify them; for the rules concerning the magiſtrates power in *matters eccleſiaſtical*, which were laid down by former *miniſters*, he now declares with "judgment and excellency of ſpirit;" p. 59. and the proſecutions referred to, were exactly according to the *ſpirit* of them rules, as I ſhall have further occaſion to ſhew to him.

4. To avoid the name of uſing *force* to ſupport religion, he calls the contracts made with miniſter's *civil covenants*, and the proceedings of the civil ſtate to collect the ſame, "acts of the "civil ſtate done for *its own utility*." p. 56.

I obſerved that the *offerings* of the people, out of which ancient miniſters were fed, were as different from civil contracts, as their own houſes were from the temple. Ex. p. 79. Mr. *F.* ſays, my conſequence is *falſe*: and to prove it, he inſtances in the contract of a people with a workman to build or repair a meeting-houſe, which he obſerves is for *religious worſhip*, yet the contract is intirely of a *civil nature*; and after ſome reaſonings upon it he ſays, "Let the ſervice "done, be what it will, ſpiritual, civil or ſecular, "'tis ſolely the *conſideration* in the covenant that "denominates it. If the *conſideration* be money

"or worldly ſubſtance, 'tis a civil covenant; in "that the *material cauſe* of it, is worldly property, "and is under the care of the civil ſtate." p. 94. And after citing ſeveral paſſages concerning the Jewiſh worſhip he ſays, "Had not thoſe cove-"nants, which required a certain ſum, viz. "tithes and offerings for the Lord's miniſters, "been of a civil or political nature, what right "or authority would thoſe civil rulers, Moſes "and Nehemiah, have had to intermeddle with "them; to reprove and correct the people for "breaking or neglecting them; and, on the "whole, to *oblige* them to render to prieſts and "Levites their due." p. 96.

Anſwer 1. As one if not both of them, were prophets, as well as rulers, and as all the people were required, *in any wiſe to rebuke their neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him.* Levit. 19. 17. Is it not ſurpriſing to hear a profeſſed miniſter of the word, aſk what right Moſes and Nehemiah had to *reprove* people, unleſs it were in things civil and political! 2. The inſtance that eh brings of Moſes, is a reproof, not of the *people*, but of the *prieſts*, for neglecting their duty in the *prieſts office.* p. 96; and if that was political, how came Mr. *F.* to ſay of the Jews, "Their "civil & religious *officers* were *different* ſetts of men, "performing different ſervices, and maintaining "as *diſtinct authority* in their reſpective provinces, "as now takes place, or SHOULD DO, in congre-"gational churches and civil communities." p. 56. I have before produced inſtances, both of kings and prophets, reproving and ſtirring up, prieſts and people, each to their reſpective duties concerning religious worſhip; but does that make, either its performance, or its ſupport to

be *political* matters? 3. The inſtance for illuſtration which our author brings is not to the purpoſe; for a man or a ſociety have right to contract with what workmen they pleaſe, to build a houſe to meet in for worſhip, and upon ſuch terms as they can agree upon, which contract has the ſame force with other civil engagements; and there is no more of the nature of religion in the ſtones and timber of the meeting-houſe, nor in the workmen's hewing and placing of them, than there is in other houſes. But will Mr. *F.* hold it to be ſo with his *bodily exerciſe*, when he "reads, writes, viſits, prays or preaches?" p. 94. If he, or any other miniſter, will honeſtly own, that their exerciſe and labour in thoſe things, has no more of the *nature* of *religion* in it, than there is in a carpenter or maſon's building a meeting-houſe; and if people will then contract with them for a *certain ſum*, to perform ſuch exerciſe, let them pay it: but then call them *political miniſters*, and not miniſters of Chriſt. If the *conſideration* and *material cauſe* in the covenant, between a miniſter and his people be, (as he aſſerts) *worldly property*, they deſerve no better name.

Men have liberty to teach their ſons what trade they think beſt; and their ſons, when of age, have liberty to follow that or other buſineſs, as people will employ them, and they can find the beſt pay; but no man in the Jewiſh church might be a *prieſt* except he were *called of God, as was Aaron.* And the means of their ſupport, as has been already ſhewn, were *offered* and *conſecrated* to God. And no Iſraelite could make an acceptable prayer, for God to *bleſs*, either his *people* or the *land* he had given them, unleſs the man could ſay, *I have brought away the hallowed things out*

of mine houſe, and alſo have given them unto the Levite, and unto the ſtranger, to the fatherleſs and widow, according to all THY COMMANDMENTS. Deut. 26. 13—15. Note, he muſt be able to ſay, *I have brought*, and alſo *have given*; not, others have *taken* what I could keep no longer. Thoſe who ſaid, *Thou ſhalt give it me now, and if not, I will take it by force*, acted under prieſts who were *ſons of Beliel*, whoſe ſin was *very great before the Lord*; *for men abhorred the offering of the Lord*. 1 Sam. 2. 12—17. And their father told them the difference, between this and common injuſtice, ſaying, "If one man ſin againſt another, the *judge ſhall judge him*; but if a man *ſin againſt the* LORD, who ſhall intreat for him? ver. 25.

Is it poſſible for any words to diſtinguiſh more plainly than theſe do, the difference between civil judge's work, and theſe religious affairs? Unjuſt dealings of one man againſt another are ſins againſt God, and he has armed the magiſtrate with the ſword to redreſs ſuch wrongs; but the affairs of worſhip, both as to officers and people, lie directly between Him and them. And it is but *lip ſervice*, when their *fear toward him is taught by the precept of men*. Yea it is *vain worſhip*, and only a *pretence*, by which they would cover injuſtice and cruelty toward others. Iſa. 29. 13. Mat. 15. 5—9. and 23. 14.

When great ſtores had been brought in by the people, in Hezekiah's time, he, in conjunction with the chief ruler of the temple, gave orders to ſecure them and appointed men to overſee and diſtribute the ſame, according to the divine commandment. 2 Chron. 31. 11, 13—21. And who

who can ſay any thing againſt rulers doing the like now?

But what is there in all this, to favor their aſſeſſing the people to ſupport miniſters, and uſing *force* to collect it? Indeed my opponent does not like this word, and the facts that I related agreable to it, he calls "horrible things." p. 111. And he chuſes the more ſoft and ambiguous word, *oblige*. p. 63, 96. Tho' if he had felt the effect of it as much as we have, I am perſuaded that *force*, and *violence* added to the end of it, would appear to him mild enough to ſet their conduct in its true light.

I before declared, that the ſcripture is abundantly clear for a *free* ſupport of miniſters, but not a *forced* one; and obſerved, that there is as much difference between them, as there is between the power of *truth* in the mind, and the power of the *ſword* on the body. Ex. p. 27. Mr. *F.* is ſo far from concurring with that obſervation, that he ſays, I *corrupted* the ſenſe of Mat. 11. 5, only becauſe I ſaid, We uſed to *think* the goſpel was preached *freely to the poor*. The word *freely*, he ſays, is not in the text. p. 64. I did not ſay, it was expreſſed there, but in the preceeding page I had quoted Chriſt's orders to his miniſters, *Freely ye have received, freely give.* Mat. 10. 8, 14. Ex. p. 24, 25. which I concluded they obeyed: but Mr. *F.* would have it, that theſe orders had *no reference* to preaching, but only to working miracles. p. 61. and the word *freely* he ſays, "Is a *capital* word in the "preſent diſpute; the controverſy in this place "turns upon it." p. 64, 65. So it does; and where he will turn to ſave his ſcheme I know not;

for

for he had declared, that the false apostles *gloried* in preaching *freely*, to prove which he brought 2 Cor. 11. 12. But I attempted to shew that their glorying was in things of another nature; that as Paul, when he first came to Corinth, wrought at tent-making, on weak days, and preached on the sabbath, *not with enticing words of man's wisdom*: they *commended themselves*, and said of him, *His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible*, Ex. p. 25. This interpretation Mr. *F.* dislikes; and in order to prove that the *false* apostles gloried in preaching *freely*, he has fully proved that the *true* apostle did so; and if he could have brought the text to say, *Wherein* WE *glory*, instead of, *wherein* THEY *glory*, it would have answered his end; but that was beyond his power. p. 66, 69. Therefore I think the argument stands thus: Mr. *F.* says, Christ's order to his apostles, *Freely give*, had *no reference to preaching*, and that I corrupted a text, by saying, We *thought* they preached so; yet Mr. *F.* has clearly proved that a *true* apostle did *glory* in *preaching freely*, but has failed of proving any such thing of the *false* ones!

The reason he gives for confining the word *freely* to working miracles, in Christ's order to his first ministers, is because he says, *The workman is worthy of his meat*; and, the *labourer is worthy of his hire*; which words, *workmen* and *labourer*, are in other places used concerning common ministerial labours, where no miracles are in question. Be it so, yet 'tis nothing to his purpose, for the verse he quotes which says, The labourer is worthy of hire, also describes how they should come at it, namely, by receiving *such things as*

they

they give. Luke 10. 7. And the texts that he adds with our fathers comments thereon, all speak the same language. 1 Cor. 9. 9—14. which says, *Even so hath the Lord ordained*; refers to ancient ministers being maintained out of the *offerings* of the people. And Gal. 6. 6, says, *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things.* Not let the collector *take it*, if he will *not give it.* Next they cite a passage which says, *As God hath prospered him.* What is to be done as God hath prospered him? answer, a *collection* of *liberality for the saints at Jerusalem.* 1 Cor. 16, 1—3. These are our ministers proofs for not being maintained by *free gift*; to which they add Neh. 13. 11. to prove that "when the church power cannot attain the end, "the magistrate is to see that the ministry be "duly provided for." p. 63. The text shews that Nehemiah used reproofs and expostulations in the affair; and the effect was this: *Then bro't all Judah the tithe.* *All* Judah were their own collectors; and it proves clearly, that Nehemiah used his influence by reproof, instruction and good example, to move both ministers and people, faithfully to discharge their respective duties in religion: and Oh that all rulers, and subjects too, would do the like!

But, say our ministers, it is a *due debt*, therefore if the people will not pay it, the magistrate is to interpose and *oblige* them to do it. p. 63. Answer, both ministers and people *owe* their all to God, and when they have done all that he has commanded, they ought to realize and acknowledge, that they are *unprofitable servants.* He has plainly described in his word, both what ministers, and

what

what people are to do, relating to his worship; and says to each, *I know thy works.* And *with him we have to do.* Heb. 4. 13. And when he says, *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things*; to enforce it he says, *Be not deceived,* GOD IS NOT MOCKED; *for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap.* Gal. 6. 6—7.

It is in vain to mince the matter. I am as sensible as Mr. *F.* is, that the body is much exercised in ministerial labours, and that God has commanded his people to communicate to them of their *carnal things*; yet the obedience of both, is what they *owe to God,* who can either prosper or blast them as he pleases; yea, can *this night require the soul of him who layeth up treasure for* HIMSELF, *and is not* RICH TOWARDS GOD. Luke 12. 20—21. And if *money* or *worldly property,* be the *consideration* in the covenant between any minister and his people, what are they doing but *sowing to the flesh?* therefore *be not deceived.*

The sum of the matter is evidently this. All orders of men ought to do what they can in their several stations to promote religion, by speaking and practising the *truth in love,* but have no warrant to use any force therein: the exact limits between ecclesiastical and civil government being this, That the *church* is armed with *light* and *truth,* to pull down satan's strong holds, and gain souls to Christ, and into his church, to be governed by his rules therein; and again to exclude such from their communion, who will not be so governed: while the *state* is armed with the *sword* to guard the peace, and civil rights of all persons

perſons and ſocieties, and to *revenge* and *execute wrath* on thoſe who violate the ſame.

And if none but *Sons of Beliel* ever preſumed, even under the *legal* diſpenſation, ſo far to interfere between God and his people, about ſupporting miniſters, as to ſay, if you will not *give* it, I will *take it by force*; how great muſt their blindneſs be, who can preſume to do ſo, under the diſpenſation which is *purely evangelical!* And I earneſtly beſeech my dear countrymen, to conſider how *inexcuſable* we ſhall appear in *judging*, if we continue to do, not the *ſame* but *worſe* things, than we *condemn* in others!

How much have our rulers, miniſters and people, complained of *oppreſſion*, becauſe of the attempts that have been made, againſt the right of *giving* our money, either by ourſelves or our repreſentatives, to ſupport government! but if the right thus to *give* it, is eſſential to *liberty* in *civil* government, where *force* belongs (as I believe it is) what oppreſſion muſt it be, to deprive any of the *liberty* of *giving* their money *freely* to promote *religion*, where *force* has no place at all! And as we have proved it to be contrary to our Lord's commandment, to call any man on earth *maſter* or *father*, it being impoſſible for us to conſtitute another to anſwer for us at his bar; therefore we connot convey a right to a repreſentative to *compel* any perſon, either to attend, or to ſupport a worſhip contrary to his conſcience. And our fathers example in theſe things, will condemn, rather than excuſe us, in ſo doing; for while they thought *force* was warrantable in ſuch affairs, they were zealous in the *compelling* perſons to *conform*, to what they eſteemed the right way of

worſhip, as well as to *ſupport* it: and if the former was perſecution, what cloak can be left for the latter! Some tell us, that money is not conſcience: that we know as well as they, but they & all will know, ſooner or later, that we all are but *ſtewards* of what we profeſs, and muſt give account thereof to the great Lord of all; conſequently it muſt be a matter of conſcience to thoſe who view things as they are, not voluntarily to ſupport a worſhip, which they believe is not right. And as a *widow* who ſuffered in this cauſe, which I before mentioned, Ex. p. 21, is now gone beyond the frowns and flatteries of men, I will give the reader her teſtimony, of what ſhe experienced in her ſufferings, as ſhe wrote the ſame with her own hand on Nov. 4. 1752, in theſe words. "October 15, the collectors came "to our houſe, and took me away to priſon, "about 9 o'clock in a dark rainy night. Bro- "thers H. and S. were brought there the next "night. We lay in priſon 13 days, and then were "ſet at liberty, by what means I know not. "Whilſt I was there a great many people came "to ſee me, and ſome ſaid one thing, and ſome "another: O! the innumerable ſnares and "temptations that beſet me, more than I ever "tho't on before! But O, the condeſcention of "heaven! tho' I was bound when I was caſt into "this furnace, yet was I looſed, and found Jeſus in "the midſt of the furnace with me. O! then I "could give up my name, eſtate, family, life and "breath, freely to God. Now the priſon look'd "like a palace to me. I could bleſs God for "all the laughs and ſcoffs made at me. O! the "love that flowed out to all mankind! then I

"could

" could forgive, as I would deſire to be forgi-
" ven, and love my neighbour as myſelf. Dea-
" con G. was put in priſon the 8th of October,
" and yeſterday old brother G. and they are in pur-
" ſuit of others; all which calls for *humiliation*.
" This church has appointed the 13th of No-
" vember to be ſpent in *prayer* and *faſting* on
" that account. I remember my love to you
" and your wife, and the dear children of God
" with you, begging your *prayers* for us in ſuch a
" day of trial." *

Their prayers were heard, ſo that ſuch oppreſſions ſoon ceaſed in that place, and have not been practiſed there in that manner ſince; tho' they are continued in other parts of the land. But if any will yet continue to *devour widows houſes*, to uphold a *pretence* of religion, I truſt this widow's teſtimony will be a witneſs againſt them another day. We come,

V. To conſider what are, and what are not, *juſt reaſons for ſeparation*.

Mr. *F.* accuſes the body of the ſeparates with being *truce-breakers*; but his proof of their being ſuch, all turns upon this point, viz. " Whereas
" they promiſed, to walk with us in holy fellow-
ſhip,

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* Here note, Mr. *F.* in his ſermons ſays, " The true
" church of Chriſt, in whom his ſpirit dwells, has never
" been a bitter, fierce, revengeful, *perſecuting* church; but
" the reverſe." And tries to fix theſe odious characters upon the ſeparates, becauſe they ſometimes called ſuch miniſters as he is pleading for, *hirelings*, and *blind leaders*; which he ſays, was done with an air of *glorying* rather than *mourning*. p. 47, 155. The reader will now judge what regard is to be paid to his witneſs in *his own cauſe*: and alſo who behaved moſt like the true church under trouble. Eſther 4. 1—3.

" ſhip, in all goſpel ordinances, they openly re-
" nounced communion with us, when *we* the
" ſtanding churches, were daily attending theſe
" ordinances of Chriſt, agreable to his inſtituti-
" on." Ser. p. 173. And now, as I had ſet down in my title page, Dr. *Owen's* ſaying, That he who will not ſeparate from the *world* and *falſe worſhip*, is a ſeparate from Chriſt; Mr. *F.* allows the ſentence to be undoubted truth, and ſays, it " Makes directly againſt the people for " whom Mr. *B.* is going to plead." p. 17. Let this matter therefore be carefully examined.

And,

I. I think we have already produced ſufficient proof, that according to Chriſt's inſtitution, none ought to be received into the church without goſpel evidence of their ſaving union to the great Head of it. The Jewiſh church was diſtinguiſhed from the nations of the *world* by their being *choſen* of God as a *nation*, and by the ordinances that he gave to keep them diſtinct from all other nations; But our Lord has broken down that wall of *partition*; and through the new-teſtament he diſtinguiſhes his church from the world, by *choeſing them out of the world*, and giving them to *know God* which is *eternal life*, whom the *world hath not known*. John 15. 19. and 17. 3, 25. 1 John 5. 19, 20. In the Jewiſh covenant they were choſen in their *family* and *national* capacity; but the goſpel covenant is *not according* to that, and the difference deſcribed is, *All ſhall know God, from the leaſt to the greateſt*. Yet the firſt thing that Mr. *F.* advanced to prove, that his brethren had not the ſpirit of Chriſt, but the reverſe, in ſeparating from his church, is he ſays,

" They

" They endeavoured to draw off from us every " *true believer*, and would have left a congrega- " tion behind them, of nothing but ſuch as they " judged to be hypocrites and graceleſs perſons. " —Surely this is not according to Chriſt's di- " rection, *Let both grow together until the har-* " *veſt.*" Ser. p. 154.

Now obſerve, the *field* wherein Chriſt ſaid, Let both grow together, he ſays is *The world*; and this direction was given when both wheat and tares *appeared* by their *fruit*: how impoſſible then muſt it be, for thoſe miniſters and churches to be duly ſeparated from the *world*, who apply to the *church* what Chriſt ſaid of the *world*? And let it be particularly noted, that the crime charged by Mr. *F.* upon his brethren, is their endeavouring to ſeparate *true believers* from ſuch as *they judged* to be graceleſs perſons; and acting according to *their judgment* in thus ſeparating the church from the world, he declares to be contrary to Chriſt's direction. And ſo did all the miniſters of Windham county; for they not only brought the parable of the tares, and many others for the ſame end that our author does, but alſo, after declaring it to be the deſign of Chriſt to " make his ſaints, and the *ordinances* of his " viſible Kingdom to be the means of the *conver-* " *ſion* of others," repreſent that miniſters and chriſtians cannot let their *light ſhine* as they ought before men, when they will have " No *commu-* " *nion* with them in the ſame worſhip, and the " *ſame ordinances.*" * And for prayer and preaching

* Aſſociation letter. p. 16. 17.

ing the word, we ever held them to be the means for converſion as much as our opponents, and as freely admit all men to the uſe of them as they do; but to commune with the world in baptiſm and the Lord's-ſupper in order to convert them, this they held and we denied; and this was a principal reaſon of our ſeparation from them. Yet they ſay, "That the church ought "to keep and caſt out all thoſe who by their "*fruits* are known to be tares no body denies." * What can all this mean? why in the ſame place they ſhew, that by thoſe who are known to be tares, they mean "ſcandalous perſons;" but they go on to ſay, † "It is the will of Chriſt, "that all thoſe who make an outward credible "profeſſion of chriſtianity, ſhould be admitted "into his church, and *tho' unconverted* be there "*among the wheat*, that they may be under pro-"per *ordinances* for their *converſion*."

So Mr. *Stoddard*, while he was pleading for all who were not openly ſcandalous, to come to the Lord's-ſupper as a *converting ordinance*, tells us that in the ſynod of 1679, they had a diſpute, whether perſons ſhould give "A relation of the "WORK OF GOD'S SPIRIT upon their *hearts*, in "order to coming into full communion.—The "reſult was, that they blotted out the clauſe, of "making a relation of the work of God's ſpirit, "and put in the room of it, The making a *pro-"feſſion of their faith and repentance*; and ſo I "voted with them, and am of the ſame judgment "ſtill." ‡ This general profeſſion, to the exclu-

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* Ibid. p. 10. † p. 23.

‡ Stoddard's appeal to the learned. p. 94.

ſion of a relation of the *work of God's Spirit on the heart*, was the real ſtate of our difference with them; but as I noted before, Ex. p. 50, this true ſtate of the controverſy was induſtriouſly ſhifted, from the *way* of knowing to the *degree* of knowledge. As for inſtance; Mr. *Eliſha Paine* proved from many ſcriptures, that, "The church "is to caſt her tares out when they *appear*, or "the whole church is leavened." * The miniſters of that county would have it that no body denied this, and yet go on to accuſe Mr. *Paine* with *abuſing* and *perverting* the ſcriptures, becauſe he held that our Lord's prohibition, *not to root up the tares*, reſpected the *world* and not the *church*. † Thus like the Jewiſh teachers, they *turn things upſide down*. Iſa. 29. 16. And now Mr. *F.* carries it that my argument is, "That the ſaints "ſhould ſeparate from the ſinners, while they "are ſuch, and deprive them of the benefit of "their prayers, holy example and other means "of their converſion.—From a religious *aſſembly*, "and ſet them elſwhere to worſhip." p. 114. 115. when I ſaid not a word of that nature, and had no more thoughts of ſuch a ſeparation, than I had of coming into the practice of his party, of ſending men to jail if they would not conform to the pariſh miniſter.

However all his attempts to *darken counſel* cannot hide the real ſtate of our controverſy, for he ſays, "Mr. *B.* reads 2 Cor. 6. 14—17. wrong. "Be ye ſeparate from UNBELIEVERS, ſays Mr. "*B.* Paul ſays, *come out from among* THEM, and "be ſeparate." From whom? Anſwer, from "viſible

* Windham aſſociation letter. p. 10. † Ibid. p. 11.

" viſible *heatheniſh idolatry*." p. 115. But I have a better authority than his, which ſpeaking of Chriſt's viſible church ſays, " Separation is a " proper and inſeparable adjunct thereof; the " apoſtle ſpeaks of church membership, 2 Cor. " 6. 14—15. Be not unequally yoked together " (yoked with thoſe of *another kind*, the plowing " with an ox and aſs together, being forbidden " under the law) with *unbelievers*, *i. e.* viſible " unbelievers of *any ſort or kind*; for what par- " ticipation hath righteouſneſs with unrighte- " ouſneſs?—or what part hath a *believer* with an " *unbeliever*? it ought not to be rendered *infidel*; " but it was done, to put a blind upon this place, " as to its *true intention*, and to countenance " *pariſh communion*." * To our grief we ſee ſuch attempts to *blind* the truth, carried on even to this day. Not a little of this is done by perverting the meaning of the word *fruits*; which our Lord explains to be what is brought forth out of the *heart* by *ſpeaking*. Luke 6. 44—45. which evidently includes perſons, principles and experiences, as their daily converſation; whereas our opponents would have had fruits to mean only herely and open ſcandals; and good fruit to be a general aſſent to truth, attendance upon worſhip, and a moral life. But they have not been willing to let our principles and reaſons for ſeparation ſtand as we held them, but have received and publiſhed many accuſations againſt us contrary to truth.

II. Chriſt's true miniſters are all furniſhed with

* Preface to Dr. Owen's diſcourſe on the *nature of a goſpel church*. p. 9, 10.

with *ſpiritual gifts* from him; but many have been ſet up as miniſters in our land, who were not ſo furniſhed, while others whom he had fitted for that work were rejected; for the miniſtry was "Limited to perſons of a liberal (*i. e.* college) education," to the excluſion of others who were allowed to be, "in themſelves BETTER "QUALIFIED for the work of the goſpel mi-"niſtry than ſome others that were ordained." * And Mr. *F.* declares it to be a *conceit* with ut reaſon or *truth*, for any now to ſay, The Lord is raiſing up and ſending forth *unlearned* men. He owns that he did ſo formerly, and the reaſon for it that he gives is, becauſe "Chriſt himſelf was "*perſonally* preſent to educate his ſons." Ser. p. 65. I obſerved that to confine this to his *perſonal* preſence, ſtruck againſt his divinity. Ex. p. 65. This Mr. *F.* now repreſents as exceeding injurious. p. 88. 89. But it is certain that Chriſt did by his *ſpirit* give vaſtly greater gifts to his miniſters after the withdrawing his perſonal preſence, than he did before: *gifts* for ordinary as well as extraordinary miniſters. Eph. 4. 11. And Dr. *Owen* well obſerves, that after his reſurrection he ordered his diſciples not to engage in the public work of building his church, till they had received thoſe *gifts*. Acts 1. and ſays, "Chriſt would "have them look neither for aſſiſtance in their "work, nor ſucceſs unto it, but from the promiſed "*Spirit alone*. And herein did he, and now *doth* "*lie* the *foundation* of the *miniſtry* of the church, "as alſo its *continuance* and efficacy. The king-"dom of Chriſt is *ſpiritual*, and in the animating

* Mr. Edwards's thoughts of the work 1742. p. 264. 266.

" principles of it, *inviſible.* If we fix our minds " only on outward order, we looſe the riſe and " power of the whole; it is not an outward viſible " ordination by men, tho' it be neceſſary by rule " and precept, but Chriſt's *communication of that* " *ſpirit*, the everlaſting promiſe whereof he receiv- " ed of the father, that gives BEING, *life, uſe-* " *fulneſs*, and *ſucceſs* to the *miniſtry.* This is the " hinge whereon the *whole weight* of it doth turn " and depend unto *this day.*" *

Mr. *F.* is ſo far from theſe ſentiments, that in order to juſtify his applying Iſa. 50. 4. to human learning, he now calls that learning, " This gift " of the ſpirit;" and ſays, " Human learning is " AS MUCH the gift of God as grace." p. 87, which diſcovers what violence ſome men will offer to language and common ſenſe, rather than yield to conviction. We readily grant, that all our faculties, and all our accompliſhments, are God's gifts; but ſucceſs in the ſtudy of languages and the liberal arts are not more ſo, than ſkill in husbandry is. Iſa. 28. 26, 29. Yea, as the former is very converſant with heathen fable and ſophiſtry, its ſubjects are often found not to be ſo honeſt as the other. Every thing that can be attained by human inſtruction and induſtry, are but the accompliſhments of *natural men*, inſtead of being *ſpiritual gifts.* 1 Cor. 2. 12—14. and 12. 1—11. The forementioned excellent author truely obſerves, † that the diſtinction of natural and ſpiritual is derived from the Head we are in. The firſt Adam was made a *living ſoul*, the laſt Adam a *quickning ſpirit*; there-

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* Dr. Owen on the ſpirit. p. 156, 157.

† Ibid. p. 217.

fore if we are not partakers of his ſpirit, we have no *ſpiritual gifts*; nothing higher than the furniture of *natural men.* 1 Cor. 15. 45—48. And the grand difference is; one has a ſupreme regard to God, the other a ſupreme regard to ſelf, in his doings.

III. Chriſt conſtituted his church a *free people*, and he commands them to *ſtand faſt in that liberty.* Gal. 5. 1—13. This command we could not obey without ſeparating from the conſtitution that Mr. *F.* pleads for. For

1. I truſt it has already been clearly proved, that he claims a power in miniſters to examine and opprobate others, and to limit the church to ſuch candidates; and as a reaſon for ſo doing he ſays, "The goſpel furniture of an able and faithful "miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, in its full latitude, is "*above the reach of common people.* Very dan- "gerous and pernicious errors, may lie ſo deep "and concealed, as to require much reading "and penetration to diſcover them, which com- "mon brethren ordinarily have not." p. 82. Which makes me think of Dr. *Owen's* remarks upon the Phariſees ſentence in John 7. 49. Yet ſays the Doctor "Was it *this people* whom "the apoſtles directed to chooſe out from *among* "*themſelves* perſons meet for an eccleſiaſtical of- "fice, Acts 6. The *ſame people* who joined with "the apoſtles and elders in the conſideration of "the grand caſe concerning the continuation of "the legal ceremonies, and were aſſociated with "them in the determination of it. Acts 15. The "*ſame* to whom all the apoſtolical epiſtles, except- "ing ſome to particular perſons, were written, and "unto whom ſuch directions were given, and du-

"ties

" ties enjoined in them, as ſuppoſe not only a " *liberty and ability to judge* for themſelves in all " matters of faith and obedience, but alſo an *eſ-* " *pecial intereſt* in the order and diſcipline of the " church: Thoſe who were to ſay unto Archip- " pus (their biſhop) take heed unto the miniſtry " thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfil " it. Col. 4. Unto whom of all ſorts, it is com- " manded that they *examine and try antichriſt's* " *ſpirits* and *falſe teachers*, that is, *all ſorts* of " hereticks, hereſies and errors, 1 John chapters " 2, 3, &c. *That people*, who even in following " ages adhered unto the faith and the authodox " profeſſion of it, when almoſt all their biſhops " were become *Arian hereticks*; and kept their " private conventicles in oppoſition unto them, at " Conſtantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and other " places." *

Mr. *F.* tries hard to perſuade his readers, that Dr. *Owen* was for him, and againſt us, but you may now judge whether the caſe is not truly the reverſe, ſince the Doctor has ſo fully proved from the word of truth, that the apoſtles and elders acted *with the brethren* in all theſe affairs, and not in a *diſtinct juriſdiction* from them. But miniſters in the Maſſachuſetts made a formal attempt to introduce ſuch a juriſdiction about 70 years ago; and tho' it did not ſucceed as they wiſhed there, yet in Connecticut a political governor, who had been a miniſter, introduced the ſcheme; and a learned miniſter who was trained up among them ſays, " This platform by implication veſts a mi- " niſter with a negative on the church in all her " acts

* Original of evangelical churches. p. 295, 296.

" acts. And in council it has thrown a very " great light in their ballance of power into the " hands of the miniſters, even to more than a " negative on the meſſengers.—Taken literally, " it in the firſt place ſtipulates the abſolute un- " ſubordinate power of particular churches. It " afterwards veſts the *conſociated council* with au- " thoritative final deciſion on all matters of diſci- " pline ſubmitted to it by the churches of the " circuit. It at length veſts the council with a " general and original *juriſdiction* on ALL " *occaſions eccleſiaſtical.*" *

It was for oppoſing and withdrawing from this juriſdiction, that the repreſentatives of Norwich, were cenſured by the miniſter and his party, and by that means were excluded from their place in the general aſſembly. Ex. p. 29. And this was the juriſdiction that exerted all its power to rob Branford of a good miniſter, becauſe he ventured to preach among the *baptiſts* againſt theſe miniſters wills. Ex. p. 30, 31. And the ſame that gave " ſpecial direction" to the *pariſh* in Canterbury to call and retain one of their candidates, againſt the minds of the *church*, which occaſioned our firſt ſeparation. Ex. p. 42. Hence

2. The *conſtitution* which Mr. *F.* pleads for, has given the *world* a power over the *church*, abſolutely inconſiſtent with goſpel *liberty*; and tho' he has exerted all his art to blind this caſe (as I ſhall ſhew in my addreſs to him) yet by his own account it appears, that miniſters ordained their candidate at Canterbury, contrary to the judgment of the greater part of the church; and that when they knew that if they did it, it would not be in

* Dr. Stiles on the Chriſtian union. p. 71. 72.

in their power to prevent the pariſh from *forcing* the church to ſupport him; and tho' they got the ſociety then to vote their *willingneſs* that the general court ſhould ſet them off; yet it appears that when the caſe came there, "The ſociety's "attorney objected and ſaid, That it would ſpoil "the ſociety, for if theſe people were releaſed, "the charges would be ſo heavy upon the reſt, "that they would forſake the miniſters." * Which objection the court heard to, and left the church in the hands of the pariſh, who impriſoned their perſons, or ſpoiled their goods, to maintain that miniſter, for more then fifteen years; and then they would not releaſe them only on condition, that they ſhould pay their part "of the tax, "or taxes already granted, to the preſent eſta-"bliſhed miniſter in ſaid ſociety;" and all that voted for his ſettlement they refuſed to releaſe at all as long as he continued their miniſter. He was ordained in 1744, and this pariſh vote (as appears from under their clerk's hand) was on April 21, 1760. Yet Mr. *F.* ſays of this pariſh, "As to "their religious conduct in the whole affair, there "is nothing appears in *them* to denominate them "the *world*, any more than in their brethren that "are called the *church*." p. 79.

But if to pretend a willingneſs to releaſe the church till they had got their miniſter ordained, and then to treat them as they did, be not like the *wicked world*, I deſire to know what can be! Yea, and as thoſe miniſters then joined with the world in ordaining that miniſter againſt the choice of the church, ſo Mr. *F.* now plainly juſtifies the world in

* Mr. Paine's view of the churches. Apology p. 7.

in proſecuting the churches paſtor for marrying; and ſays, "Setting up in oppoſition to the ſtanding churches, their paſtor was not an officer known, either in church or ſtate." p. 80.

Now kind reader ſee where we are. This was a regular church till the clergy and the world obliged them, either to take a miniſter contrary to their judgments, or to leave the meeting-houſe; and becauſe they never petitioned the *civil* powers to form them into a "religious ſociety," but only to be exempted from oppreſſion from others, Mr. *F.* calls them *ſeparates, irregular*, &c. p. 76. 79. Therefore if theſe miniſters did not *cauſe diviſion and offences, contrary to the goſpel*, I deſire to know whoever did! and we are commanded to *mark and avoid* ſuch. Rom. 16. 17.

I before quoted Dr. *Owen's* obſervation concerning national churches, that tho' they talk of *liberty of conſcience*, yet when it comes to the iſſue, all choice is prevented, and in the church where a man was *baptized in infancy*, and in the *pariſh* where his habitation falls, in that *pariſh-church* he muſt worſhip, or be dealt with as a *ſchiſmatick*. Then I produced this caſe at Canterbury, and proved, that two members of that church were dealt with and expelled Yale-college as ſchiſmaticks, only for meeting for worſhip with the church they belonged to, in a place ſeparate from the pariſh meeting-houſe; and thoſe who expelled them declared to the world that, "Neither the major part of the members in full communion, nor *any other perſons*, in any pariſh, have *any right* to appoint any houſe or place for worſhip on the ſabbath, *ſeparate* from, and in oppoſition to the meeting-houſe, the public place appointed

by

" by the general aſſembly and the pariſh." This I obſerved, makes the general aſſembly lawgivers for the church, and the pariſh executors of it. Ex. p. 83. 84.

But Mr. *F.* ſays " That relates ONLY to the " *placing* of meeting-houſes,—and ſo is a matter of " a *civil* nature; but don't ſo much as *touch* " the principles, the order, diſcipline and govern- " ment of the churches;" and he aſſerts that my laſt ſentence is " evidently void of TRUTH." p. 103, 104. What! does the *pariſh's* forcing the *church* to hear a man they were not edified by, or elſe to leave the meeting-houſe, and then miniſters and colleges, treating them as ſchiſmaticks for ſo doing, not *touch* the *principles* and *government* of the churches! What amazing blindneſs is here diſcovered!

By Mr. *F's* own account, a certain quantity of worldly eſtate gives every inhabitant power, by their conſtitution, to vote for miniſters, and all the advantage that the members in full communion have above the reſt is that they may vote with the world if they have no eſtate; and he ſays " All vote " in our pariſhes, as men *qualified by law*; and " as Mr. *B.* brings in the *clergy* with the *world*, " with a deſign to do them a miſchief, he makes " a terrible overthrow; ſlaying clergy and laity, " ſtanding churches and ſeparates, all with one " ſtroke: but no matter for that—if the miniſters " & their churches may but fall, he ſeems willing " that he and his brethren, *Sampſon-like* ſhould " die with the *Philiſtines*." p. 83, 84. This is a ſort of *rhetoric* that ſome bring in to ſupply the want of argument. I well know that in civil affairs, chriſtians vote with others by virtue of their civil

civil and *worldly* qualifications; but as the gospel ministry is a *spiritual* office, men ought to have *spiritual* qualifications in order to vote for them; and this *confounding* of church and world together in such affairs, is a *Babel* which must and will come down. Dr. *Owen* says, "Where the *fundamentals* of religious worship are corrupted "or overthrown, it is absolutely *unlawful* to join "unto, or *abide in* any church." And the first of these *fundamentals* that he names is, "That all ministers or officers of it, be duly "chosen by the *church itself*." * And Dr. *Increase Mather* says, "It would be *Simonical* to "affirm that this sacred privilege (of voting for "a pastor) may be purchased with *money*, or that "contributions can entitle to it." † And he names a number of principles, which if we espouse, he says we then give away the *whole congregational cause*; one of which is, ‡ "That "persons not qualified for communion in speci-"al ordinances, shall ELECT PASTORS FOR CHURCHES."

Here note, under the Massachusetts first charter, none were allowed to vote for officers, either in church or state, but members in full communion; but a turn of times in that respect happened a little before these words were written; and the apostacy had now prevailed so far, that we were obliged to separate from the *world*, who had usurped such a power over the *church*, or else give away the *whole congregational cause*. And as the heads of the college declared, That the parish in

* Original of churches. p. 180, 181.
† Vindication of the order of the churches. p. 67.
‡ Preface. p. 8.

Canterbury had "the ſpecial direction of the "aſſociation," in keeping that miniſter. Ex. p. 42. therefore it was not I that *yoked* the *clergy* with the *world*, as Mr. *F.* terms it; for I only remarked what they had done themſelves. And now he aſſerts, that the divine command, *Be not unequally yoked*, but *be ye ſeparate*, means from *heathens*, and not from *unbelievers* in general, p. 115. We therefore could not be free from that *yoke* which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear, without ſeparating from them. We have often heard them talk of ſeparating *godlineſs* or religion by theſe means, but the evident deſign is *gain*; and the command is *From ſuch withdraw thyſelf.* 1 Tim. 6. 5. The above were the main cauſes of our ſeparation, tho' other points that are connected therewith had their influence.

Unwarranted ways of worſhip, is one reaſon that Dr. *Owen* gives for ſeparation. This Mr. *F.* ſays, "I never heard objected even by our "ſeparating brethren (as I remember) nor is "their any ſhadow of reaſon for the charge." p. 104. Yet he did inform us that his brethren urged the "Half-way covenant as a ſufficient "reaſon for their ſeparating." But tells us that they *improperly* called it *half way*, and ſays, "it "is *full* and *compleat*, binding them to *obſerve* "*all things whatſoever the Lord our God has com-* "*manded.*" While his next words ſhew, that he leads perſons thus to covenant to *obſerve all*, when he knows they do not mean *all*; that they do not mean to come to the Lord's table, for want of ſufficient improvement in "experimental "godlineſs." Ser. p. 92. And what can this be

be but *falſe worſhip*? yea lying to God! Another way of worſhip he tells us that his brethren did object againſt, and he owns he did practice, which is, "writing down *all* that he judged "expedient to deliver at that time, and then "*praying* for aſſiſtance." Ser. p. 149. Theſe ways of worſhip he has told the world that his brethren did object againſt, and yet now he can't remember any ſuch thing, which ſhews how hard it is to remember or retain in mind, any thing that condemns ſelf.

Neglect of *evangelical* diſcipline in the churches, and turning it into a *worldly dominion*, is another reaſon for ſeparation. Ex. p. 87. But Mr. *F.* aſſerts that it is not applicable to his churches. p. 101—104. Whether the foregoing facts do not prove the caſe to be otherwiſe, notwithſtanding his witneſs in his own cauſe, the reader muſt judge.

The next article is Dr. *Franck's* ſaying that, "Carnal preachers under the influence of pride "and ambition, interpret whatever is done to "their perſons, as an aſſault againſt their *holy* "*function*, pouring forth their malice and bitter"neſs upon all thoſe, who, they ſuppoſe have "affronted them," &c. Ex. p. 84. And I produced the words of ſixteen of our author's brethren in the miniſtry, in what he now calls an *excellent letter*, wherein they accuſe thoſe who ſeparated *from them*, with holding a principle which implied, "That there is NO *inſtituted mi*"*niſtry*, or order of men, peculiarly appointed "to that work in the chriſtian church." While the ſame men exerted all their power, to prevent our churches having *ordained miniſters*. Ex. p. 47.

89. * I also referred him to seven other ministers in his own county, who in a printed *alarm* to the world, compare our withdrawing *from them*, to *Core's* gainsaying *Moses* and *Aaron*, who were called immediately from heaven. Ex. p. 23. And now Mr. *F.* declares that the *pastor* of the church in Canterbury, "was not an officer "known, either in church or state," only because he was not set up "according to the *constitution*, "of the country." p. 80. Though by the way, the honorable justices of the superior court in the Massachusetts province, have often, in cases bro't before them, determined that ours are as truly *ordained ministers* as theirs are.

Yet notwithstanding all the evidence that I produced, Mr. *F.* says, "Our real character is "*as different* from that which he has set up, as "the true protestant churches are from the an-"tichristian; or as the apostle *Peter* was from "the *Pope* of Rome." p. 102. But the reader will judge, whether accusing us with holding to, NO *instituted ministry*, and with being guilty of the *gainsaying of Core*, only because we *followed not them*, be as far from interpreting what is done to their *persons*, as an assault against their *holy function*, as Peter was from the Pope or not; or whether our separation, as above described, was not

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* In the same *letter* p. 42, 43. they compare the going to worship, with such as they call *lay-teachers*, to following those who worship *other gods*, Deut. 13, and say "The "arguments against your compliance is the same---and if "there seem to be never so many appearances of God's "power attending it, you may not go after it, any more "than for the like reason, you may not go after a *false god*.' If this be not a forbidding those who *follow not them*, what can be so called! Mark 9. 38.

not truly from the *world* & *falſe worſhip*; for no other than ſuch a ſeparation do I pretend to juſtify.

A few remarks ſhall cloſe this head. And,

1. It is not doubted but that many have come out from thoſe called ſtanding churches in our land, who did not act upon theſe principles, but have been influenced by outward appearances, or unreaſonable impreſſions, rather than an underſtanding regard to divine truth? and which has cauſed a great deal of trouble and ſearching trials among us, and given occaſion to our enemies. Yet all the errors in the world cannot overthrow the truth, nor excuſe us if we do not obey it; and it is ſo far from being *truce-breaking*, to withdraw from miniſters and churches, when we ſee that they groſsly ſwerve from the truth, and will not be reclaimed, that we can not keep covenant, either with God or them, but by ſuch a withdraw.

2. This our opponents allow, but deny our having any ſuch cauſe to withdraw from them. And to try to ſupport their argument, they collect all the good things, or good pretences that they can find on their ſide; and then all the errors and evils that they can ſee or hear of among ſeparates. But what work would it make, if we ſhould requite them in the ſame way, and draw their character to the world from the falſe-teaching, lying, whoredoms, drunkenneſs and other abominations, that in fact have happened among their miniſters and churches! yet there would be as much juſtice in ſo doing, as in a very great part of what they have done to us in theſe affairs. Mr. *F.* told the world, that his deſign was to draw the ſeparates *pictures to the life*, that they might

might be ashamed. Ser. p. 130. In doing of which he collected the worst things that he could find among any that bore the name; yea, I am told by a gentleman of note in Stonington, that one instance of ill treatment to him which he has published, was from a woman that never was of either the separate church or society, only as she happened to live then at one of their houses. At the same time he says, "I know not of *one* princi-"ple or practice among them, that is agreable to "the gospel, but what they *learned in our chur-*"*ches.*" Ser. p. 113. Whatever good things "they have among them, they have them not *as* "*separates*,—the things that I have told you of "above, are their *characteristicks.*" Ser. p. 160.

Since he talks so much about learning, I think to make a little trial of what some of their rules of logic will do in this affair; as thus,

Every cause will produce its own effects. Mr. *F.* gives a dreadful account of how roughly the separates treated him, soon after they came out of the standing churches. But when they had been out above 20 years, he says "They are now, "much more moderate and civil, than they were "in that day; are very peacable, kind, obliging "good neighbours." Ser. p. 157, 158.

Ergo, they have received better teaching since they came out than they had before. Again,

Take away the cause, and the effect will cease, Mr. *F.* tells the world, that the special occasion of publishing his sermons, was "The revival of "the spirit of separation and annabaptism." Preface, p. 3.

Ergo, the spirit of our separation when revived, was a spirit of civility, peace and good neibourhood,

bourhood, and all his repreſentations to the contrary are unjuſt and abuſive, for which he is condemned out of his own mouth.

3. The only way to bring this controverſy to a fair iſſue, is to examine the true nature and effects of our profeſſed principles, or ſhew wherein we do not act agreable to them. This I have aimed at in all theſe labours, and deſire others to do the ſame with me. If any man can ſhew us wherein we hold any wrong principle, or in a friendly manner correct any diſagreable practice, he will do us a real kindneſs; but to charge us with any thing that we are conſcious we do not hold, can never convince us that we are wrong, or they right.

4. It has ever been ſatan's method, when he could no longer keep people eaſy with the dead carcaſe of religion, than to promote in ſome, great pretences of ſpirituality which are not true; which formaliſts have never failed to improve as an argument againſt reformation. How much have papiſts uſed this argument againſt proteſtants, and epiſcopalians againſt puritans and diſſenters? And is not the ſame now uſed againſt us? That there has been much enthuſiaſm, and many falſe pretences to ſpirituality in our day, is a melancholy fact; but it is quite as injurious to lay the blame thereof to the main principles, or chief leaders of our ſeparation, as it would be to the chief inſtruments of the revival of religion in 1741; for there were as bad or worſe things of that nature, that happened before our ſeparation, than have ſince. Therefore it appeared needful thus to trace matters up to their original, and to ſet principles and facts in as clear light

as might be, not only to vindicate our ſentiments and characters, againſt our learned opponents, but alſo to detect the falſe pretences of ſome, who are ready to ſeparate from their brethren upon every turn of affairs, yet pretending to ſtand and act in the ſame cauſe we firſt came out upon. And this is no new thing; for even in the apoſtles days, after they had earneſtly appeared for truth and goſpel liberty, and for deliverance from Jewiſh and heathen bondage, ſome took occaſion under the name of *liberty* to *diſpiſe government*; who notwithſtanding their great *ſwelling words*, were really *ſervants of corruption*. 2 Pet. 2. 10—19. And it will ever be found, that licentiouſneſs is as real an enemy to liberty, as tyranny; nor is their any great difference between them.

Government is for every one to act toward others, in their ſeveral ſtations and relations, by known laws and eſtabliſhed rules; tyranny and licentiouſneſs are the following our own inclinations without due regard to ſuch rules. But as ſuch a way of acting muſt look odious to all rational minds, when it appears in its own colours; therefore men have always tried to cover it with ſome ſpecious pretence or another, which yet may be detected by ſuch marks as theſe. 1. Where ſelf prevails, it will try to excite in others ſo high an opinion of our deep inſight into things that they do not underſtand, as to yield implicitly to us; while a humble teacher abhors ſuch a dominion over others faith, and labours to manifeſt the truth to every man's conſcience, and exhorts all ſaints to walk in Chriſt *as they have been taught*. 2 Cor. 1. 24. and 4. 2. Col. 2. 7—18.

18. 2. Whatever garb pride is covered with, if it is croſſed it will diſcover bitterneſs, and often moves its ſubjects to become falſe accuſers, and fierce deſpiſers of thoſe who are good. Micah 3. 5. 2 Tim. 3. 3, 5. While the humble ſoul is patient, and in meekneſs labours to inſtruct thoſe who oppoſe themſelves. 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. Jam. 3. 1, 13—18. It appears by Jotham's parable, that worthy minds, like the olive, fig-tree and vine, prefer uſefulneſs and the yielding of ſweet fruit to others, to any promotion and power over them; while worthleſs creatures, like the bramble, are forward for dominion; and if any refuſe to ſubmit to them, they are preſently for fire to come out and devour the beſt characters that will dare to oppoſe their ambition. Judges 9. 7—15. Hence 3. True love unites tenderneſs with faithfulneſs, labouring to gain mens perſons, while it uſes boldneſs againſt their ſins; but a proud temper wants to get rid of all who refuſe to gratify it, and is ready to ſay, *Am I my brother's keeper!* Gen. 4. 1 John 3. 12.

As I am willing to have all I have ſaid and done in theſe affairs, tried by theſe marks, and no further regarded than it agrees therewith; ſo I earneſtly intreat all my friends and brethren, carefully to examine their conduct thereby. If we do not deſpiſe government, we have a conſcientious regard to Chriſt's authority, and to act in our ſeveral ſtations and relations as he has commanded us. He has commanded us to *hold faſt our profeſſion*, and to conſider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forſaking the aſſembling ourſelves together, &c. Heb. 10. 23—25. But do not ſome let go

their profeſſion, inſtead of holding it faſt; and forſake their brethren becauſe they ſay they are fallen, inſtead of conſidering their weak and tempted ſtate, and labouring to ſtir them up, or to reſtore them in a ſpirit of meekneſs, as the command is! Gal. 6. 1. The ſame authority ſays, Take heed to yourſelves, if thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee, rebuke him; and if he repent forgive him: and ſays, All things that are reproved are made manifeſt by the light. Luke 17. 3. Eph. 5. 13. But do not ſome accuſe their brethren, of having fallen out of the teſtimony, of not coming up into the witneſs; or ſome ſuch *general* phraſes, without any *light* to *manifeſt*, wherein they have advanced any *particular* error, or broken any particular precept? Yea, do not ſome hover in general or figurative words, and tell their brethren, that they cannot ſee where they are, unleſs they come up into the witneſs, &c.? which is a practiſing the very ſame iniquity under the pretence of ſpiritual teaching, as others have done under the name of great learning. Whereas our Lord ſaid to his apoſtles, A candle gives light to all that are in the houſe; *let your light ſhine before men, that they may ſee*, &c. Such perſons are very ready to condemn the learned for keeping their people in ignorance; though ſome of them are as groſsly guilty of *darkening counſel* with *words without knowledge*, as any ſophiſter of the age.

True paſtors feed God's people with knowledge and underſtanding, not with unintelligible noiſe. We have a glorious promiſe, that when ſcorners are conſumed, who have made ſuch uſe of *words* as to turn aſide the juſt for a thing of nought,

nought, that then, *They* that erred in ſpirit ſhall come to *underſtanding*, and they that murmured ſhall *learn doctrine*. Iſa. 29. 20—24. And it affords great comfort and encouragement to my ſoul, to ſee how much this promiſe is now fulfilling in our land; notwithſtanding ſome are ſtill afraid freely to exerciſe their underſtandings for fear of getting legal; and ſeem to think that to *learn doctrine*, and the diſtinct nature and connection of things, would lead them off from ſpirituality: whereas we have no more of ſpirituality than we have of likeneſs to God, in whom is *no darkneſs at all*; and the very reaſon why it is impoſſible for God to lie, or to be tempted of evil, is becauſe he *knows better*. 1 John 1. 5. James 1. 13—17.

One important queſtion is yet before us, which is; How ſhall we know when we have juſt cauſe to ſeparate and when not? The rule is perfect, but the beſt of men, or of churches, are imperfect; and ſome will join with no church, becauſe they can't find a perfect one; while others ſeem as if they would ſwallow any thing, if it did not croſs their own inclination. The rule requires condeſcention and forbearance, but how ſhall we know its true limits and extent? I confeſs that this has been as difficult a point heretofore in my mind, as any point in practical godlineſs. The cleareſt light that I have obtained in it is this. It is eſſential to acting rationally that we have ſome deſign or end in what we do. Now the leading deſign of the goſpel, is to turn men from ſin to God. Act. 26. 18. And ſo far as conforming to circumciſion, and other Jewiſh rites, would promote this end, Paul condeſcended to the Jews, (and ſo to others) but when thoſe things were brought

brought up in ſuch a way as to croſs that deſign, he would not give place an hour longer, but appeared againſt them with a fixed reſolution. Gal. 2. 5. and 5. 2.

Another great deſign, is the edification of the ſaints; and we are all required to follow the things which make for that end. Rom. 14, 19. And every member of Chriſt, is required to improve the gift that he has given for that end; and liberty ſo to do, is of importance to be maintained. Yet while this liberty has not been allowed, (as we have ſeen) in the churches we came out of, ſome have ran to the other extreme, and have been ſo zealous for the liberty of ſpeaking, as not duly to regard others liberty of judging; and inſtead of being *ſubject* one to another, and *cloathed with humility*, have ſadly diſcovered a contrary behaviour. 2 Cor. 14. 1 Pet. 5. 5. Once more; the wiſdom that is from above, is *firſt pure*, then *peaceable*; and ſo far as peace can be had conſiſtent with purity; it is to be purſued with all men: but we are never to ſell the truth for peace, no not to ſave natural life. Jam. 3. 17. Heb. 12. 14. Prov. 23. 23.

Now if our eye be ſingle in any of theſe affairs to the end for which God has appointed them, he will ſurely guide us in judgment in our uſe of the means; for Chriſt's word is, If thine eye be ſingle thy whole body ſhall be full of light; but if evil, how great will be our darkneſs? Mat. 6, 23. And it is very neceſſary that we well diſtinguiſh, between what are the divine commands, and the forbearance that is allowed in ſome caſes towards perſons who do not fully conform to them. For want of this diſtinction, ſo great a

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man as Mr. Bunyan, improved the inſtance of forbearance in 2 Chron. 30. 18—20, to eſtabliſh the cuſtom of communing at the Lord's table with unbaptized perſons. Whereas the perſons who then partook of the paſſover *otherwiſe than it was written*, had not enjoyed the free uſe of thoſe writings for a long time; and we have no account of their ever partaking ſo again. What a great miſtake then was it, to bring an extraordinary caſe, to eſtabliſh a general rule? Yet ſome have gone further ſtill; for they have improved inſtances of forbearance as an argument againſt the authority of expreſs commands.

How have many improved inſtances of God's viſiting, and uſing further means with degenerate churches before he caſt them off; as an argument that we ought to continue with them, even after it is evident to us that they refuſe to be reformed? Again, Paul's foregoing his right of temporal communications from ſome of his hearers, for particular reaſons that he gives, 1 Cor. 9. ſome have improved as an argument that hearers are under no obligation to communicate to any on account of their teaching, but only on account of poverty; and if they are not poor, then not at all. Tho' there is not a plainer command in the bible, for miniſters to preach the goſpel, than there is, for *him that is taught in the word*, to *communicate unto him that teacheth in* ALL *good things*." Gal. 6. 6. I truſt it has been ſufficiently proved, that the authority of King George does not extend to this caſe; but ſhall that make us to diſregard the authority of King Jeſus! If he be duly regarded, I believe it will be found that both miniſters and people, are but *ſtewards* of what they poſſeſs;

poſſeſs; and therefore that avoiding all unreaſonable cenſuring of each other, their great concern ſhould be, that in their ſeveral ſtations and relations they may be found *faithful*, ſo as at laſt to receive *praiſe of God.* 1 Cor. 4. 1—5.

AN

ADDRESS

TO

Mr. *Joseph Fish.*

SIR,

SINCE you accuse me with, 'setting up myself as *Censor general* of the present generation, and with sending abroad a book, full of invective, bitterness, clamour and evil-speaking against Christ's ministers.' p. 124, 126. I know of no better method to answer it, than by a little imitation of the apostles example in like cases. Acts. 11. 4—17. and 21. 1—21. Namely to give a plain narrative of what I have done, and the reasons of my doing so.

As to setting up myself, I freely appeal to all that knew me, that from my cradle to my entrance on preaching, I discovered a disposition, the reverse of setting up myself, as head or leader of any company whatsoever. And my conscience bears me witness in the sight of God, that the

the only reaſon of my engaging in that work, was becauſe I was ſo clearly convinced, that He had given me a *gift*, which He called me to improve in that way, that I durſt not neglect obedience to Him therein; for I believed then, and do to this day, that there was a *wo unto me if I preached not the goſpel*: therefore I heartily devoted myſelf to that work, and was freely received therein by God's people; in which I went on for a number of years, before I had any thoughts of appearing to the world in print. But being called to preach in various places, that old queſtion was often put, by thoſe called ſtanding miniſters, *by what authority doſt thou theſe things?* and the darkneſs which they diſcovered about it, at laſt moved me to attempt to hold up to the world, the light that was given me therein, which was accordingly done in 1754, under the title of, 'The nature 'and neceſſity of an internal call to preach the 'goſpel.' And your learned brethren were ſo far from attempting ro confute it, that ſome of them expreſſed ſuch charity as this; that '*I. B.* 'never wrote that book, but got his name ſet 'to the works of ſome other man; for (ſaid they) 'ſcarce one to ten of our college-learnt men 'could write ſuch a diſcourſe.' Whereas it is known to Him who will judge us all, that no perſon on earth, either wrote or indited one line of it, but he whoſe name ſtands in the title page.

As to baptiſm, after long and ſore exerciſes of mind, occaſioned as I ſee now, chiefly by the falſe repreſentations which tradition had handed down to us, both concerning principles and facts, I was at laſt favored with a comfortable eſtabliſhment. After which I was publicly declared, to

be

be a *covenant-breaker*, for turning from infant baptiſm, notwithſtanding our covenant, like that of the fathers of this country, expreſſed an engagement, to embrace further light as God ſhould open it to us. When this cenſure came abroad, in the reſult of a council of elders and brethren, who had profeſſed and acted in fellowſhip with baptiſt churches, it naturally cauſed a general difficulty; and which at length occaſioned a general meeting of the ſeparate and baptiſt churches in your town, in May, 1754; where I remember ſir, that you was among the ſpectators; when, inſtead of attending to the point in hand, which was, whether a declaring, that turning from infant baptiſm was covenant-breaking, did not give juſt occaſion of offence to the baptiſts? I ſay inſtead of that, much time was taken up in expoſing my imperfections about theſe affairs; which had the ſame effect with many, that ſuch-like treatment of the baptiſts has often had, ever ſince the firſt reformations from popery; viz. to prevent their ſeeing things in their true light. But tho' my character was thus injuriouſly treated, ſeventy miles from home, before an aſſembly, from at leaſt three of the four governments of New-England, yet I choſe as much as poſſible, to avoid all perſonal conteſts, and only publiſhed, as clearly as I was enabled, the true ſtate of the argument concerning baptiſm, in a diſcourſe upon the *bond-woman* and the *free*.

And I never engaged in a printed controverſy with any particular perſon, for ſeventeen years after my call to the public miniſtry; till in 1764, the gentleman under whoſe miniſtry I was born, and from whom I ſeparated, with ſix others, pub-

liſhed a piece, wherein, after mentioning the order to blow the *trumpet*, and to ſound an *alarm* in Zion, they went on to alarm the world, with a repreſentation that the *late ſeparates* and *baptiſts*, were *going faſt* into a *dreadful apoſtacy*; and that it was, "hid from them, or rather, that they "*will not ſee*, that they have fell into the way of "*Cain*, and are in danger of *periſhing* in the *gain-* "*ſaying* of *Core*." Upon a ſight of this, and other things of like nature, from my old miniſter, I ſent a printed *letter* to him, upon the injuſtice of ſuch conduct. And what is there in all this, of ſetting up myſelf? Tho' I know I am a very imperfect creature, yet I can freely ſubmit, both the occaſion, and the temper of theſe writings, to the judgment of every chriſtian reader.

When you ſir, three years after, publiſhed a large piece, in the ſame ſtrain with the miniſters juſt mentioned, and I was prevail'd with to examine it, I thought ſomething further was called for, than what I had before done. And as there is a rule in ſome caſes, to *rebuke ſharply*, and to uſe a *rod*, which is diſtinguiſhable from a *ſpirit of meekneſs*. 1 Cor. 4. 21. I thought it right to make a little trial of the *rods*, which you and others have furniſhed us with, to ſee if miniſters had not ſome feeling, as well as the people that they have been threſhing theſe twenty years. The temper and manner of my executing this deſign, is further to be conſidered. You tell me that if I had reproved you with *meekneſs* of ſpirit, and a temper good and kind, you ſhould *doubtleſs* have underſtood my inoffenſive language, and *given a ſerious attention* to it. p. 124. Could I have believed that, I aſſure you I would have

taken

taken that method; for tho' a little ſalt and vinegar may give food a good reliſh, even with healthy perſons; yet I think it was a very juſt obſervation of a noted author, in his *eſtimate* of the manners and principles of the times, that people's being much more taken with things that *tickle* and *irritate*, than with thoſe which are *ſolid* and *nouriſhing*, clearly proves the *diſtempered taſte* of our age.

I wiſh you had now given me reaſon to think, that you was diſpoſed to give due *attention* to mild and fair reaſoning, upon the affairs between us; for that is my choice: and ſince we ſeem to agree in two general heads, I think to make a little trial of what can be done under them.

Firſt I obſerved, that let us talk what we may, of defending *truth* and of promoting its cauſe, if at the ſame time we advance *falſe arguments*, or diſcover a wrong *temper* and behaviour, we thereby contract guilt to ourſelves, and injure our fellow-men. This obſervation you concur with, p. 125. And let us ſee what can be done under it.

And,

1. Thoſe who *commend themſelves*, and *meaſure themſelves by themſelves*, inſtead of the eternal ſtandard of truth, uſe falſe arguments. 2 Cor. 10. 12. Now ſir, in order to convince me of my faults you ſay, "You ſaw me every where friend-"ly to the work of God; and while I expoſed "& reproved the falſe principles, ſpirit and prac-"tice of my erring brethren, you heard me fre-"quently and *ſufficiently* expreſs my charity, love "and *tenderneſs* for their *perſons*." p. 126. This is what you ſay; now for the proof of it.

You

You ſir, in your ſermons, began your arguments, againſt the ſeparates with allowing, that they held a number of *truths*, and had ſome *orders* among them that were good, but ſay, "I know "not of one principle or practice, among *them*, "that is agreable to the gospel, but what they "learned in OUR churches.—But THEY have "done much to weaken and pull down *the church* "*of God*, rather than to build it up." p. 113. Of learning you ſay, "Though *all* OUR teachers "have not an equal degree of learning; yet "HERE the treaſure lies, in THESE churches of "Chriſt." * p. 168. "The body of the ſeparates "are *truce-breakers*, for—*they* openly renounced "communion with us, when WE the ſtanding "churches were daily attending the ordinances of "Chriſt, agreable to his inſtitution." p. 173. But you ſay, "Such is the conduct of our ſepa-"rate brethren, in this grand affair, of caſting "off a *learned*, *able miniſter*, and ſetting up ſuch "as are *unlearned* in their room; 'tis really affect-"ing (and I ſpeak it with concern) to ſee how "they are beguiled and led aſtray, by the ſubtil-"ty of *Satan* in this *intereſting* affair; and how "manifeſtly they *join with* the *gates of hell*, a-"gainſt THE church of Chriſt. †——Satan de-"ceives them." p. 177. Yea, as as if you had had been inſpired to tell men's hearts, you ſay of theſe brethren "*They* held faſt *their deceit*, they "*refuſed* to return." p. 128. "Surely we have "as

* Now Sir, is learning limited to the churches of your own town! p. 12.

† Note Sir, you forgot this paſſage when you complained of my title. p. 16, 17.

"as full evidence, as the nature of the caſe can "admit of, that it was a *falſe ſpirit*, and a "falſe religion that made the ſeparation a-"mong us, a device of ſatan, that old ſerpent "the devil, to injure THE church of God." p. 161. "The *luſts* of ſpiritual-pride, ſelf-love, "vain-confidence or ſelf-ſufficiency; theſe *luſts* "do evidently appear *in* and run *through* the "WHOLE affair of ſeparation (though *all* are not "equally guilty)." p. 164. And to deſcribe what a *ſweet* and *calm* temper you went with, to the firſt ſeparate ordination in your town, you name the two worſt enemies the chriſtian has in earth or hell, and then add the ſeparates as the third; ſaying, "The great Searcher of hearts, "knows the ſevere conflict that I had with SA-"TAN, SELF and the SEPARATES (for ſeveral "hours before the engagement) and the ſenſible "victory that he gave me over *them all*." p. 156.

Now ſir, when through your ſermons I ſaw you thus labouring to confine the work of God to your own party, and heard you in ſtrong terms, not only declare your brethren to be governed by their *luſts* and *deluded* by the *devil*, but alſo to rank them with the worſt of *your* enemies; how was it poſſible for me to ſee *you friendly* to God's work, or *tender* to his people, while you was ſo doing!

This reminds me of another inſtance of your late *tenderneſs*. From your attempts in your ſermons to draw our picture in odious colors, I took occaſion to obſerve, that Ward's daughter being taken from her huſband, and John Smith's wife being poiſoned, had often been caſt upon us from

pulpits

pulpits for the ſame end; although the former never was received as a member of any of our churches, and the latter was excommunicated for his corrupt principles before he committed that fact. You now tell your readers, that I have omitted ſome material and *intereſting* circumſtances relating to Smith, and the church at Canterbury, which keep the *bad tendency* of their ſeparating principles out of ſight; which therefore you have publiſhed; tho' you ſay, "It grieves "me to relate theſe things, for I feel *tender* for "the cauſe and people of God." p. 112, 113. Theſe *intereſting* circumſtances are, That he had been a very vicious man, but was looked upon by that church a remarkable inſtance of converſion; and that after his excommunication, and the great crimes he committed. "Yet ſo tena-"ciouſly did they hold to their darling principle "of a *certain knowledge of chriſtians*, that they "retained their opinion of him as a chriſtian "ſtill: and many of them brought the inſtance "of the fall of David, Peter, &c. to juſtify their "ſentiments." You have not been ſo fair as to tell us which members they were that talked ſo, nor from whom you had your information. I know that their paſtor and ſome others talked otherwiſe to me; and their conduct evidenced to the world, that they were earneſt to have juſtice done him for his ſin, both in church and ſtate. But ſuppoſe that every word you have related was truth; I could produce an inſtance of one of your fathers in the miniſtry, who publicly declared his opinion that one of his members was gone to heaven, that put an end to her own life; how then is the bad *tendency* of our ſeparation diſcovered

vered by what you have related? Rather, does not the *intereſting* matter lie here; that you are conſcious that your brethren if not yourſelf, have from your pulpits reproached the ſeparate churches with theſe two inſtances of ſcandal, one of which never was among them, and the other they had cleared themſelves of in a goſpel manner; and ſo it ſhould appear that you have been guilty, as Dr. *Franck* ſays, "In your ſermons of wholly "*perverting* God's ordinance, by rejecting and "calumniating thoſe who deſire to govern their "lives by the goſpel of Chriſt." Ex. p. 84.

2. Should you ſir, hear an enthuſiaſt, (as I once did) bring this as an argument to prove himſelf right, in receiving one to adminiſter baptiſm, who he ſaid, he feared was *corrupt* in principle, and knew he was in practice, viz. That this text came ſuddenly to his mind, *Go with him nothing doubting, for I have ſent him*: would you not at once declare this to be a falſe argument? Well, in a book publiſhed by one Mr. *I. F.* who ſtiles himſelf a *maſter* of *arts*, when he is arguing for miniſters having *human learning*, he in his 175th page ſets down exactly theſe words; "Our "Lord hath ſhown us that LEARNING is emi-"nently uſeful, yea even neceſſary. Iſa. 50 4. "*The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the* "*learned that I ſhould know how to ſpeak a word in* "*ſeaſon, to him that is weary.* Intimating that "he ſhould not have *known how*, without a "learned tongue." Now there was one *I. B.* that had no A. M. to put to the end of his name, who yet ventured to publiſh an *examination* of this book, and when he came to this paſſage, he was ſo bold as to ſay, in his 44th page, "If Mr.

F.

" *F.* knows no better, than to conſtrue this ſcrip-
" ture ſo, where is his learning? and if he does,
" where is his *honeſty*? his controverſy with us
" is about *human* learning, whereas that text
" expreſſeth *divine* learning, as plain as words
" can poſſibly do; and there is great reaſon to
" think that the prophet here perſonates HIM,
" who tho' he were a Son, yet *learned he obedience*
" *by the things which he ſuffered*, and being *tempt-*
" *ed*, he was *able to ſuccour them that are tempt-*
" *ed.*"

Mr. *F.* has taken him ſmartly to taſk for thus meddling with him, in a piece called, The *examiner examined*: and on this particular, tho' he owns that the controverſy was about *human learning*, and that he took the prophet in that text, to be ſpeaking of the *man Chriſt Jeſus*; yet he ſays, " The *manner* of his receiving this *learning*
" or knowledge, does not alter the *nature* of it;
" 'tis *human learning* ſtill: and Chriſt *as man*,
" had all that is contained therein." And he takes up half a page to ſhew to us, that Chriſt was eminently furniſhed with *grammar*, *logic* and *rhetoric*; " in all which (ſays he) the excellency
" of *human* learning conſiſts." then he ſays,
" Tho' I know not what Mr. *B.* intends, parti-
" cularly by *divine* learning (for his ideas are
" very ſingular)—yet, I freely concur, that the
" phraſe alſo imports an *ability* of ſpeaking in
" all points, as becometh a perſon TAUGHT OF
" GOD, and filled with all *divine* and *heavenly*
" *wiſdom* and *knowledge*, and a ſingular *ſkill* of
" *winning ſouls*, and working upon men's HEARTS
" and CONSCIENCES. Theſe things I own are
" included or ſuggeſted to us, by the prophet

" in

" in this ſcripture, though more remotely: the " FIRST and *moſt obvious* import of the word, is " in favor of *human* learning; which is AS " MUCH the GIFT of GOD, in its place, as GRACE " to improve it to the *glory* of the giver. And " it's highly worthy of our reſpectful notice, in " this day of reproach and contempt caſt upon " this *gift* of the SPIRIT, even *learning*, that our " Lord in ſpeaking of miniſterial accompliſh- " ments, which he had an infinite fulneſs of, " ſhould uſe ſuch a ſtriking *phraſe* as this, *The* " *tongue of the learned.*" p. 85—87.

It appears plain, that this writer had ſome thoughts about him; for he ſubmits his *learning* and *honeſty*, in all this, only to "the *learned* or judicious reader," and tells us, If *modeſty* be added, he *thinks* it would lead Mr. *B.* to enquire whether he did not, *exerciſe himſelf in things too high for him!* I ſay, it appears plain that he had ſome thoughts about him: for 'tis a wonder if ſome people who are not maſters of arts, do not prove themſelves to be ſo deſtitute of *modeſty*, and ſo " ſingular in their ideas," as to judge, that this miniſter had not lately read that old queſtion, *How knoweth this man letters, having never* LEARNED? nor the *tender* and *charitable* ſentence of the *learned* miniſters of that day, who ſaid, " Are ye alſo *deceived!* have *any* of the *rulers*, or " of the *Phariſees* believed on him! but THIS " PEOPLE who KNOWETH NOT *the* LAW, *are* " CURSED!" John 7. 15, 47—49. Yea, tis much if *this people* do not ſome of them preſume ſo far upon *logic*, as to conclude, that it was this miniſter's *ſpiritual* gift of *human* learning, that

that taught him to *know how*, in a letter of CHRISTIAN reproof, * to introduce the HEATHEN *fable*, of *Pheaton*'s ſetting the world on fire; and (whatſoever *Jupiter* may do with his thunder bolts, yet as to men) *how in ſeaſon* to ſay "WE "have not LEARNED—*railing for railing*.—I "hope the *church* is not in any *great* danger. "—As for *yourſelf*, I believe you may reſt ſe- "cure. The *baſeneſs* of your reflections, and "*bitterneſs* of your ſpirit (however provoking) "will likely ſave you from the *angry blows* of "your injured neighbours; for if *Michael* the arch- "angel, when contending with the *devil*, durſt "not bring againſt him a *railing accuſation*, who "among the followers of Chriſt, dare enter the "liſt with Mr. *Barkus*? the ſpirit of the goſpel "forbids it: you may bid defiance to every "*chriſtian* pen. You are alſo defended, and "may likely eſcape, by the *illſavour* of your "writings; on account of which *property*, you "are aptly compared by Mr. Flavel, to ſome "cunning animals, which when purſued at the "heels, drive away both dogs and huntſmen, "with their *intolerable ſtench*," p. 124, 125.

Ah ſir! what times are we fallen into! that one poor illiterate teacher, ſhould prove on over-match for the *angry* tempers, *chriſtian* pens, and delicate noſes of all *the learned* huntſmen in the land; yea, and for their dogs too, ſo as to oblige them all to quit the purſuit, and give him the field!

But

* In your propoſals for ſubſcription, this part of the book is called, "A letter of *chriſtian* reproof for the *bitter anti-* "*chriſtian* ſpirit that runs through the whole of his per- "formance."

But truly Sir, if I am rude in ſpeech, I mean not to be ſo in knowledge; and I can freely refer it to all chriſtian people among us, let them be learned or unlearned, whether your argument for the neceſſity of *human* learning, from that ſtriking phraſe, is not as falſe as his was, who took the ſtriking phraſe, *Go with him*; without due regard to the character of the perſons we ſhould go with? For my part I confeſs, that for you to call it a *ſingular idea*, to ſpeak of *divine* learning, as diſtinct from all that man can teach, when yet in the next breath you are forced thus to diſtinguiſh, and call the former, a being *Taught of God*, and filled with the *divine ſkill* of *winning ſouls*, and working upon men's *hearts* and *conſciences*; and then to hear you declare that this *divine ſkill*, is more *remotely* included in Iſa. 50. 4. than the *human* learning of grammar, logic and rhetoric, which you aſſert, is *as much* the gift of God as *grace*; and that you do not *freely* ſubmit your *learning* and *honeſty* in theſe matters to any but the *learned*; I own that all theſe things are too wonderful for me, unleſs I ſuppoſe, that as thoſe who formerly made *heart* religion a *remote* thing, and ſought deep to *hide* their *counſel*, in righteous judgment, *wiſdom* was *hid* from them, Iſa. 29. 13—15; ſo that ſomething of like nature has taken place again: For when miniſters ſtand as they ought, they renounce ſuch *hidden things*, and by *manifeſtation* of the TRUTH, commended themſelves, not only to the learned, but to *every man's* CONSCIENCE *in the ſight of God*. 2 Cor. 4. 2.

3. For a diſputant to take any truth which his opponent holds as much as he does, and blend it

with

with that which is not true, in order to gain his argument, this you ſay is " falſe and ſophiſtical " reaſoning." p. 99. A proof by the way, that your temper can bear with hard names, when you think them applicable to your opponent. Whether theſe be ſo here or not, is to be conſidered. The caſe is thus. In trying to prove that the ſeparates *heaped* to themſelves teachers, you ſaid, " According to one grand principle of " their churches, *every one* muſt exerciſe his gifts " in *public* as he is impreſſed or moved by the " ſpirit." In anſwer I obſerved, that for you to pretend that we hold *all* to have the gift for *public* teachers is not true. Ex. p. 80.

You now charge me with ſtarting from the queſtion, and ſay, " 'tis evident that in the fault- " ed paſſage above, I have *limited* the charge " of ſpeaking in *public*, to them that have *gifts*, " and that are *impreſſed* or *moved* by the Spirit " to exerciſe them. And from hence Mr. *B.* " infers, that I therein charge the ſeparates with " holding that ALL have the gift for public " teachers." This you call *falſe* and *ſophiſtical* reaſoning. p. 98, 99. To which I ſhall only ſay, that your words were, *Every one*; and you cloſe that argument with naming " women, old " and young, together with *unſkilful* and ſelf- " conceited exhorters," which you repreſent that the ſeparates were *obliged*, by the *canons* of their church, to ſuffer to " Teach and *preach* among " them" Ser. p. 163, 165. And if every one does not mean *all*, and if *unſkilful* perſons moved with *ſelf-conceit*, means the ſame as *gifted* ones *moved* by *the ſpirit*, then I have reaſoned ſophiſtically; if not I believe the epithet will fall back

upon

upon him who began the argument. That I freely leave to others, and only remark, that this was the firſt time of my hearing of *canons* in our churches, except the canon of ſcripture.

Now to come to what is mainly here aimed at, I would note, that the general plan of your ſermons, was to give the characters of Chriſt's church, and then to apply the ſame to the churches of our day. In doing of which you endevoured to prove, that thoſe you call *ſtanding churches*, are upon the Rock, and ſo near like the firſt church in Plymouth, as to claim a *right* of relation as *ſiſters* or *children* thereto. And though you was forced to own that they, and the authors of Cambridge platform, profeſſed that the power of ordination is in the church, yet you tried to prove that they did not act according to that profeſſion. This I proved ſo plainly to be a miſtake, that you have not attempted to refute me in it; though you now ſay "the *practice* of the churches "is generally if not univerſally as I have ſaid it "ought to be." But leſt the reader by this ſhould ſee a real difference between you and our fathers, you ſlip in a clauſe from Cambridge platform, concerning the churches improving *elders* in ordinations where they can conveniently be obtained. p. 46. This point I twice over declared, that we ALL hold to, and practice upon. Ex. p. 17. 63. To what end then, can it be here mentioned but to hide the truth?

In the ſcond place I clearly proved, that our fathers way of admitting members, was by a *verbal relation to the church*, of *a work of God's Spirit on their hearts*; which has ſince degenerated into *written* relations, and from that to *none at all*, in many

many places. This you cannot deny, but try to evade it by ſaying, you was not treating of a *particular* church; and then you ſlip in a clauſe, that in caſe of *exceſſive fear*, our fathers varied from their common method. p. 51. And who ever denied that?

This led me down to open a third article of difference between you and our fathers, which is the root of all, namely the *matter* of the goſpel church. And I produce full teſtimonies from ſuch as you allow to be ſome of your moſt eminent fathers, "That if it ſhould paſs for current doctrine in New-England, that all perſons *orthodox* in judgment, as to matters of faith, not *ſcandalous* in life, ought to be admitted to partake of the Lord's ſupper, without an examination concerning the *work of ſaving grace in their hearts*, it would be a real *apoſtacy* from former principles." Then I produced the *letter* publiſhed againſt us by ſixteen miniſters (and you now call it an excellent *letter*. p. 54.) which ſays, "It is the will of Chriſt, that all thoſe who make an *outward credible profeſſion of chriſtianity*, ſhould be admitted into his church, and though *unconverted* BE THERE." Ex. p. 18. 20.

Thus I proved, that our fathers held the power of ordination to be in the church; but that you hold it to be in miniſters. That they held to admitting members by verbal relations; you to written ones, or none at all: And thirdly that our fathers declared, That a *general profeſſion* would be real *apoſtacy*; and I proved that your churches have got into it: yet you ſhuffle along, till from our fathers writing, you bring out the materials

materials of the church to be *profeſſing believers*, and *their children*, and then ſay, "Surely here "is *diſtinction* without difference——And yet he "is ſhewing an *eſſential* difference between the "ſtanding churches, and the firſt in the land. "ALL the difference is they EXACTLY agree." "p. 52.

Whether this is moſt properly called *ſophiſtry*, or *lying*, I leave with God and your own conſcience, praying that you may be brought to true repentance.

Having as I concieved, fully proved an eſſential difference between your churches and our fathers, and meeting with that glaring perverſion of the parable of the tares, viz. applying what Chriſt ſpoke of the *world*, to the *church*; I took occaſion to point out the nature of his order, *Let both grow together*; and how it has been violated among us, by depriving thoſe of their *worldly* liberties and enjoyments, who would not conform to the pariſh miniſters. Upon which I gave it as my mind that there may and ought to be, a *ſweet harmony* between civil and eccleſiaſtical rulers, but not *ſuch a union* as had been among us; for which I gave my reaſons, and endevoured diſtinctly to run the line between them, Ex. p. 20—32. yet you aſſert this part of my book to be "mixed, inconnected and without "order," and that I have got *beſide* my *profeſſed* deſign, and alſo that I fault your churches for *a connection* with the ſtate, which you ſay, "is evi- "dently warranted by the holy ſcriptures." p. 55. 56. But take notice; the firſt part of my profeſſed deſign was, to *open the conſtitution* of your churches. Ex. p. 15. and in this place I

was

was not beſide it, but upon it, and proved the *conſtitution* to be ſuch, that if the pariſh miniſter diſliked another's preaching near him, or called for his ſalary, the ſecular powers muſt exert their *force* to remove thoſe he was offended with, and to anſwer his demands: And if you Sir, thought *ſuch a connection* to be warranted by ſcripture, your buſineſs evidently was to bring your proofs. And have you done it? No.—Indeed you have proved that there was *a union* between the church and ſtate in Iſrael, (which I held as much as you) but not a word of *ſuch a connection* as I had faulted. p. 56. 57. Then you ſhew that Iſa. 49. 23, and 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. imply "Not only "that the magiſtrate ſhould not himſelf lay "hands on us, nor ſend his officers and ſervants "to ſpoil us of, or interrupt us *in*, the enjoyment "of our religious rights; but alſo that as he has "it in his power, he would reſtrain and puniſh "thoſe that ſhould moleſt or trouble us in mat-"ters of *godlineſs* or *religion*, as well as in matters "of *honeſty*, which we have a right to, in com-"mon with other men." p. 58.

And where is ſophiſtry now! dare you Mr. *Fiſh*, before him whoſe eyes are like a flame of fire, pretend that I have wrote a word, or formed the leaſt argument againſt *ſuch* an exerciſe of the magiſtrates power towards the church as you have deſcribed! No: if thoſe powers had not been moved by *your* brethren in the *miniſtry* to act the very contrary part, to what you have proved from the word of God that they ought to have acted, I aſſure you I would not have troubled you in this affair. I obſerve that inſtead of agreeing with me that the *worſt miſtake* that our fathers

fathers brought to this land, was their confounding church and state together, you reckon one of their worst mistakes was, allowing the church the power of ordination; on which you say, "Jesus "Christ is head and king; and none may right- "fully dare to set up any practice, or establish "any order in his house, but what he has direct- "ed to: to be sure none contrary to his direction. "The holy scriptures, not the platform, are to "guide us in this important question." p. 47. Yet in the important question, whether magistrates have any warrant to use force to support ministers or not? here *the case is altered.* Mr. *F.* has found no warrant for that in the scriptures, therefore he flies to the platform, and tells of the *rules* our *pious fathers* laid down therein, which he says, "Is done with so much *caution*, "judgment and *excellency of spirit*, that, tis pity "Mr. *B.* had not contented himself with the rules "*there.*" p. 59. And what are these rules? why one of them contains these words. "If "any church shall rend itself from the com- "munion of other churches;—in such case the "magistrate is to put forth his *coercive power.*" Another of them is; "The magistrate is to see "that the *ministry* be duly provided for." which you explain as meaning that he shall "*oblige* the "people that won't do their duty without." p. 63.

Now Sir, come up like an honest man. These rules were first drawn by ministers, and thou art the minister who hast blamed me for not being *contented* with them, declaring them to be laid down with *caution* and *excellency of spirit*; and I can freely appeal to your conscience, that it

was really according to the *ſpirit* of theſe rules that the magiſtrate acted, when to prevent our firſt ſeparate ordination at Mansfield, they ſent their ſervants, when the old gentlemen that was elected for their paſtor, was at worſhip with his church the day before he was to have been ordained, and LAID HANDS on him, and carried him to priſon, for preaching without the licence of ſuch *miniſters* as thou art. This my eyes ſaw; and the next day I ſaw more than a dozen of ſuch miniſters come up after the *ſhepherd* was thus *ſmitten*, to ſee if they could not *ſcatter that flock*, which, as your rules expreſs it, had *rent itſelf* from your communion. Ex. p. 47.

So openly were thoſe doings of the civil powers (which you have proved was the reverſe of what they ought to have acted) countenanced by miniſters, who were moſt if not all of them, ſigners of that which you now call an *excellent letter*; and ſo openly did they ſay in practice, that if theſe people would withdraw from their *churches*, they ſhould not peaceably *grow together with them in the world*. Yet Mr. *F.* thou art the man, who haſt declared to the world, that "It is wholly "out of rule, and quite injurious, for Mr. *B.* "to charge the *churches* or their *miniſters* with "ſending men to jail for rates, or other *like pro-* "*ſecutions* (as he rudely talks, and unreaſonably "complains, throughout his book) for *theſe* pro- "ceedings are evidently the acts of the civil ſtate, "done for its own utility." p. 56. "The doings "of the civil authority, and of that ALONE." p. 59.

I hope our honorable rulers will take warning by this, and never more exert their power till they

they know who it is for; and never use any more *force* to support ministers, till ministers can produce divine rule for it, and also will own that it is *for them.** All the prosecutions that I have complained of are so evidently for ministers, and according to the *spirit* of your rules, that I promise you, if you can point out one instance which is not so; for that I will make a public acknowledgment. I come,

4. To observe, that all arguments which are founded upon a violation of the *golden rule* are certainly false ones. That your arguments against us were so founded. I before attempted to prove by three witnesses, out of your sermons; the first of which I introduced thus: No man or community can think it reasonable, to have their *character* drawn only from their *imperfections* without any of their *virtues*: yet shewed that

* "It is not the diversity of opinions (which cannot be avoided) but the refusal of toleration to those of different opinions (which might be granted) that has produced all the bustles and wars that have been in the christian world, upon account of religion. The heads and leaders of the *church*, moved by avarice and insatiable desire of dominion, making use of the immoderate ambition of magistrates, and the credulous superstition of the giddy multitude, have incensed and animated them against those that *dissent* from *themselves*; by preaching unto them, contrary to the laws of the gospel, and the precepts of charity. That schismaticks and hereticks are to be outed of their possessions, and destroyed. And thus have they *mixed together* and *confounded* two things that are MOST DIFFERENT, the church and the common-wealth. — That magistrates should thus suffer these *incendiaries*, and *disturbers of the public peace*, might justly be wondered at; if it did not appear that they have been invited by them unto a participation of the spoil, and have thought fit to make use of their covetousness and pride, as means whereby to increase their own power." Lock on Toleration, p. 70—72.

that you had done ſo with the ſeparates. Ex. p. 5. In reply to which, you now ſay, "It was not "my proper buſineſs to draw their character as "*men* nor as *chriſtians*, but only as *ſeparates*, "(ſermon, p. 160.)—Whatever virtues they "had as men or as chriſtians (which I frequently "allow them) yet I knew of none they had *as* "*ſeparates*. Therefore I had properly to do "with nothing but their *imperfections*, errors or "faults." p. 19.

Here Mr. *F.* permit me to tell you one thing, and that is; as much as you think I am prejudiced againſt your order of miniſters, yet I would not have ventured to believe, much leſs publickly to declare, that you knowingly held to ſo groſs things as you now expreſs, both concerning a learned tongue, and the golden rule, not upon the verbal teſtimony of the beſt friend I have on earth. No, I ſhould have thought they ſome way miſtook your meaning: but what is written is written. And though ſome peculiar circumſtances that I have paſſed through, have (through divine goodneſs) taught me more how ſelf can blind us, than perhaps many others know; yet your book has taught me more of it than I ever ſaw before, and in that reſpect has done me good; and I ſhould be glad to do you a like kindneſs, though not in a like manner.

Dear Sir, according to your own account, you know of many virtues that theſe people had as *men* and as *chriſtians*, but ſay, "I knew of *none* "they had as *ſeparates*." That is, as they ſtood oppoſite to *yourſelves*, neither *manhood* nor *chriſtianity* muſt go into their *character*. What a

thing

thing is SELF! I attempted to favour you with a glaſs to ſee him in before; but as it was from a *biſhop*, you paſs it by as not to the purpoſe. p. 22. I am now favoured with another that is ſo much clearer, and from ſuch as you own to be worthy hands, that I can't but hope for better ſucceſs than the other met with. It is this. Three years after our fathers publiſhed thoſe rules in the Cambridge platform, which you ſay 'tis pity I had not been contented with, Mr. John Clark, paſtor of the baptiſt church in Newport (and who was learned both in Greek and Hebrew) went with two of his friends to viſit ſome brethren in Lynn; but as they were peaceably worſhipping God together, on Lord's day, July 20, 1651, a magiſtrate was ſo zealous to follow the miniſters rules, that he put forth his *coercive power*, and had thoſe three men ſeized before they had finiſhed their forenoon exerciſe, and carried in the afternoon to the pariſh worſhip; and afterwards ſent them priſoners to Boſton. There they were all fined, and for not paying it, one of them was whipped thirty laſhes, and two of his friends, for openly taking him by the hand, and praiſing God for his courage and conſtancy in ſuffering, were carried before the general court in Boſton, and fined 40s. each, or to be whipped.*

When news of this reached to London, Sir Richard Saltonſtall, one of the Maſſachuſetts firſt magiſtrates, wrote to the miniſters of Boſton in this manner.

"Reverend and dear friends, whom I un-
"feignedly love and reſpect.

"It

* Neal's hiſtory of New-England, vol. I. p. 299—303.

" It doth not a little grieve my ſpirit to hear " what ſad things are reported daily of your tyran- " ny and perſecutions in New-England.—Truly " friends, this your practice of *compelling* any in " matters to worſhip, to that whereof they are " not *fully perſuaded*, is to make them *ſin*, " for ſo the apoſtle (Rom. 14. 23) tells us, and " many are made hypocrites thereby, conforming " in their outward man for fear of puniſhment. " We pray for you, and wiſh you proſperity e- " very way, hoped the Lord would have given " you ſo much light and love there, that you " might have been eyes to God's people here, " and not to practiſe thoſe courſes in a wilder- " neſs, which you went ſo far to prevent.— " Theſe rigid ways have laid you very low in " the hearts of the ſaints. I do aſure you I " have heard them pray in the public aſſemblies, " that the Lord would give you meek and " humble ſpirits, not to ſtrive ſo much for *uniſor- " mity*, as to keep the *unity of the ſpirit in the " bond of peace.*" *

To this Mr. Cotton wrote an anſwer, wherein are theſe words, " † Honored and dear Sir, " My brother Wilſon and ſelf do both of us ac- " knowledge your love, as otherwiſe formerly, " ſo now in the late lines we received from you, " that you grieve in ſpirit to hear daily com- " plaints againſt us.—Be pleaſed to underſtand " we look at ſuch complaints as *altogether* in- " jurious in reſpect of *ourſelves*, who had no " hand or tongue at all to promote, either the " coming

* Maſſachuſetts hiſtory, vol. III. p. 401, 402.

† Ibid p. 403—407.

" coming of the persons you aim at into our as-
" semblies, or their punishment for their carri-
" age there. Righteous judgment will not take
" up reports, much less reproaches against the
" innocent. The cry of the sinners of Sodom
" was great and loud, and reached up to heaven;
" yet the righteous God (giving us an example
" what to do in the like case) he would first go
" down to see whether their crime were altogether
" according to the cry, before he would proceed
" to judgment, Gen. 18. 20, 21. and when
" he did find the truth of the cry, he did not wrap
" up all alike promiscuously in the judgment,
" but saved such as he found innocent. We are a-
" mongst those whom (if you know us better) you
" would account peaceable in Israel.—Yet nei-
" ther are we so vast in our indulgence or tolera-
" tion as to think the men you speak of suffered
" an unjust censure. For one of them (Obadiah
" Holmes being an excommunicate person him-
" self, out of a church in Plymouth patent,* came
" into this jurisdiction, and took upon him to
" baptize, which I think himself will not say he
" was compelled here to perform—The inpri-
" sonment of either of them was no detriment.
" I believe they fared neither of them better
" at home.—But be pleased to consider this
" point a little further. If the worship be law-
" ful the magistrate compelling him to come to it,
" compelleth him not to sin, but the sin is in his
" *will* that needs to be compelled to a christian
" duty.—Better to be hypocrites than profane
" persons;

* He was excommunicated for separating from the church in Rehoboth.

" perſons; hypocrites give God part of his due,
" the outward man; but the profane perſon giv-
" eth God neither outward nor inward man.—
" You know not, if you think we come into this
" wilderneſs to practiſe thoſe courſes here which
" we fled from in England. We believe there
" is a vaſt difference between men's inventions
" and God's inſtitutions; we fled from men's in-
" ventions, to which we elſe ſhould have been
" compelled; we compel *none* to men's inventions.
" If our ways (rigid ways as you call them)
" have laid us low in the hearts of God's people,
" yea and of the ſaints (as you ſtile them) we do
" not believe it is *any part* of their *ſaintſhip*.—
" Nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth, we have
" tolerated in *our* church ſome *anabaptiſts*—and
" do ſtill to this day.—We are far from arro-
" gating infallibility of judgment to ourſelves.
" You ſee how deſirous we are to give you what
" ſatisfaction we may to your loving expoſtula-
" tion."

Here obſerve, 1. Our moſt noted fathers, flinched at the firſt thought of uſing force with their neighbours in religion, and tried to turn the blame off to others. 2. When they conſidered that they did not mean to hold any wrong principle or practice, but were in earneſt to promote the right way, they argued that ſurely others ought to go in that way too; and therefore, 3. That it muſt be their *will* that kept them therefrom, which *will* ought to be *compelled*. 4. If they could not bring ſuch perſons hearts into the right way, yet that it were better for God to have their bodies, than to looſe body and ſoul both. 5. Thoſe who do not like

ſuch

ſuch treatment, have liberty to keep their diſtance, but if they *will* come into our juriſdiction, their impriſonment is *no detriment*, for we cauſe them to fare as well there, as at home. 6. By this time it is become good *manners* with ſuch *learning* to charge a noted chriſtian magiſtrate with *ignorance*, if he could ſo much as *think* that there was not a *vaſt difference* between the *compellings* to men's inventions, practiſed by old perſecutors in England, and theſe *compellings* which were uſed by good chriſtians, who fled into a wilderneſs from ſuch bad courſes. 7. Men of the greateſt learning or piety in England, muſt have nothing go into their *characters* as *ſaints* which condems the *compelling* conduct of the ſaints here, yet 8. The ſaints in this wilderneſs are ſo far from arrogating infalibility to themſelves, that if others will join with *them* while they are not of their judgment concerning the initiating ordinance of the church, free liberty is granted ſo to do; but to act their own judgment in a ſeparate ſociety, that muſt not be tolerated.

And now Mr. *F.* if you cant ſee ſome features of *yourſelf* in this glaſs, one would be ready to think you was got into ſuch a caſe as the learned Dr. Young tells of, viz. to need ſpectacles to ſee a mountain. Yet ſhould that be the caſe, you have a pair very handy; for only look into the 74th and 75th pages of your ſermons, and you will find it declared, That the rules our Lord has given are *perfect*, but that the wiſeſt and beſt of men are *imperfect*, and know but *in part*; therefore when they come, it may be, with hearts *equally honeſt*, and conſciences *alike tender*, to apply thoſe rules, they conclude upon different

forms of divine ſervice; which renders it difficult, if not *impracticable* for them to worſhip harmoniouſly together. And how do you know but that this is the very caſe with your diſſenting brethren? Will you have the face to pretend to know that their *hearts* were not *equally honeſt* with your's! If not, then what a violation of rule have you been guilty of, in trying to ſtrip them of all their *virtues*, and to draw their *characters* to the world only from their *imperfections*! Yet you ſay, "I acted agreeable to the *golden rule*, "in telling them *of*, and reproving them *for* "their *imperfections* and errors: for ſurely, that "rule don't oblige us to tell a brother all his "*good properties*, when we go to reprove him "for his faults." p. 19. Perhaps if you again look over our Lord's treatment of the ſeven churches of Aſia, you will find your *ſurely*, to be a miſtake as to the manner of reproving; but Sir, that was not the work that you was about, by your own account the principal deſign of your ſermons, was to draw the ſeparates *character before others* inſtead of reproving *them*: and a principal article of advice and exhortation in your concluſion, given out to the world is, "Go not af-"ter THEM nor follow THEM.—*keep your diſ-*"*tance** from THEM. Beware that you neither "*interrupt* their devotion, nor *join* with THEM in "their worſhip. How can you with any *good* "*conſcience* after I HAVE SHOWN you from "whence they aroſe, their principles, ſpirit and "tendency."

* In your ſermons p. 164, you applied Iſa. 65. 5. to us; but who is it now that ſays, *ſtand by thy ſelf, come not near ME!*

" tendency." Ser. p. 191. Is this your way to reprove brethren!

Should you Sir, try again to evade conviction by pretending that I have forgot my ſubject, and inſtead of opening the *difference*, have ſhewn an *exact likeneſs*, between you and our fathers. I reply that this is a great miſtake; and to introduce a ſhort view of the difference, I would refer you to Ezek. 43. 7, 9. And whatever may be the primary meaning of the text, I believe there is no injuſtice in accommodating it to the caſe in hand. A houſe filled with the *carcaſes* of fathers and rulers, cannot prove that it is *the ſpiritual houſe* which they built with *lively ſtones*. And to examine whether ſomething of this nature does not appear in New-England, let the following points be conſidered.

1. Dr. Owen, who for ſome time was expected, and always was much eſteemed here, evidently expreſſed the ſentiments of our moſt eminent fathers, as to the *ſucceſſion* of miniſters, when he obſerved, that it is *ſufficiently* ſecured, by our Lord's erecting that office, and giving warrant for it's continuance to the end; and by his continuance according to his promiſe, to communicate *ſpiritual gifts* unto men for the edification of his church; whoſe duty it is to chuſe, call and ſolemnly *ſet a part* unto the office of the miniſtry ſuch as Chriſt *by his ſpirit* has made meet for it, according to the rule of his word; and then he ſays, "Thoſe " who plead for the continuation of a *ſucceſſive* " *miniſtry*, without reſpect unto *theſe things*, without " reſolving both the *authority* and *office* of it *un-* " *to them*, do but erect a *dead image* or imbrace " a *dead* CARCASE, inſtead of the *living* and *life-*

" *giving*

giving inſtitutions of Chriſt."* Compare this with what you reckon one of our fathers worſt miſtakes, p. 47. 2. Our fathers had ſuch a *ſpirit of faith* in preaching,† that the ſame Mr. Cotton whom we were but now treating of, declared, that the *difference* will ever hold between the word *read* and *preached*, they are *two diſtinct* ordinances. Herein we hold with him; but you do not. Ex. p. 72. 73. 3. In the effect of ſuch preaching, which brought perſons before all the aſſembly to declare the *workings of God's ſpirit in their hearts*, we hold with our fathers, while many of your churches have not even the *carcaſe* of that cuſtom left. Ex. p. 54, 55. 4. Tho' our fathers held to the uſe of compulſion in religion, yet they did not entruſt ſuch a power with any but *brethren* in their churches; but you Sir, put this compelling power into the hands of many who are not members of any church at all. 5. As I have already ſhewn, they allowed none to *vote* for rulers or miniſters but members in full communion, and your beloved Mitchel declared, that it would *ruin* the churches if *election of miniſters* were carried by a *looſer ſort* of members, Ex. p. 51. How then are they now *ruined*, when you are forced to own that *worldly* eſtate makes voters in ſuch affairs! p. 83. 6. Though the firſt fathers of New-England held to infant-baptiſm, yet they were ſo far from holding of it upon the footing you do, that though ſome tried hard to bring it on to that footing when Cambridge platform was compoſed, yet they were prevented the doing of it, as Dr. Mather

* Original of churches p. 165.
† 2 Cor. 4. 13.

Mather tells us, by *many worthy men.** And ſuch worthy men as Hooker, Cotton, Shepard, and others, were gone to eternity, and Mr. Norton was in England; when they introduced the ſcheme in 1662, which you embrace: and the aged preſident Chauncy, and Mr. Devenport, who were preſent, could not be eaſy with bearing only a verbal, but they and others alſo bore a printed teſtimony againſt it. † 8. While our fathers were ſo much blinded as to think force was to be uſed in religion, they were in earneſt to force men to *conform* to what they eſteemed the right way, as well as to ſupport it: but how little pains is now taken with men's perſons, if they can but get their money!

In ſhort, the greateſt likeneſs that I can ſee between many of the preſent generation, and thoſe fathers is in a *tenderneſs* for *ſelf*, and a want of tenderneſs for its oppoſites. Mr. Cotton could readily find a divine example, where ſelf was affected, for not proceeding upon *report*, without a full examination whether they were *altogether* true or not; and alſo for not wrapping up the guilty and innocent together: yet how contrary thereto is his treatment of the baptiſts in the ſame letter? And you ſir, complain much of me for publiſhing many things concerning your denomination, which you do not diſpute the truth of (though I gave you a fair opportunity to do it, by naming perſons and places, giving dates and quoting my vouchers) while you have treated us

* Mitchel's life p. 73.

† Therefore it was contrary to truth for you to aſſert an *exact agreement* with them, even in the point of infant baptiſm. p. 60.

us quite otherwiſe; and how have you now raked the ſtreets of Canterbury for ſomething againſt that church, and then you inſinuate that we are not *honeſt* to own our principles, nor *humble* enough to confeſs and put away our *errors*, becauſe we do not own all that you are pleaſed to accuſe us with! p. 113. As to the principle you there refer to, I did confeſs the truth concerning it, Ex. p. 50, and you muſt anſwer it to our great judge, for your inſinuating the contrary here againſt me.

I am now prepared to anſwer your query, whether I had not forgotten my ſect, when I expreſſed my concern for the fall of New-England from her ancient diſcipline? Ex. p. 92. And you ſay, "Why did not his heart ſmite him, "and his pen blot out that expreſſion, of his "deep concern for New-England, as fallen from "its ancient purity and glory, becauſe her mini-"ſters do now teſtify againſt the corruptions "of *ſeparation* and *anabaptiſm*, juſt as the fathers "in the firſt churches did?" p. 111.

Anſwer 1. The forgoing account plainly ſhews that they were ſo much blinded by *ſelf*, as to try to juſtify ſuch treatment of diſſenters from *them*, as one of their chief magiſtrates calls *Tyranny*, *perſecution* and *rigid ways*; and as learned ſaints on the other ſide of the water, veiwed to be ſo, even in their moſt ſolemn exerciſes. Yea the learned Mr. Neal (whom none, that have read his hiſtory of the *puritans* can ſuſpect of being prejudiced in favour of the baptiſts) he does not ſcruple to declare, that in dealing with Mr. Clark and his brethren, they "Broke in upon "the *natural rights* of mankind, puniſhing men,

"not

"not for disturbing the *state*, but for differing "sentiments in religion." * And when Dr. Mather attempted to excuse a like treatment of the baptist church in Boston, which was formed May 28, 1665, by declaring it to be a violation of the law of the *commonwealth* relating to the *orderly* gathering of churches: which *order* was, not to do it without the approbation of *magistrates* and neighbouring *ministers*.† Mr. Neal boldly replies, ‡ that this plea "Condemns all the dis-"senting congregations that have been gathered "in England since the act of *uniformity* in the "year 1662." And can our fathers tyranny, persecution and rigid ways, ever justify your doing the like!

2. While they accused the baptists of *wilfulness*, they most evidently discovered a great *bias* and *prepossession* against them in their own minds. I noted before that Mr. Hooker, and from him Mr. Mitchel, *resolved* to have an argument able to *remove a mountain*, before they would recede from infant baptism. Ex. p. 98. And Mr. Cotton, in a piece he wrote on that subject, against such as he owns did not, "deny "magistrates, nor predestination, nor original "sin; nor maintain free-will in conversion, "nor apostacy from grace: but only denied the "lawful use of the baptism of children, because "it wanteth a word both of commandment and "example from the scripture." Yea that he was bound to believe that they did this "out of "con-

* History of New-England, Vol. I. p. 303, 304.
† Magnalia, B. 7. p. 27.
‡ Ibid. p. 304.

" conſcience, as following the example of the " apoſtle" : yet he goes on to declare, that he alſo believed, that *ſatan* had *yielded* ſo far in theſe ſtirring times of reformation, as to plead no other argument than what may be urged from that main principle of reformation, " That no duty of " God's worſhip, nor ordinance of religion is to " be adminiſtered in the church, but ſuch as hath " juſt warrant from the word of God. And (ſays he) by urging this argument againſt the " baptiſm of children, ſatan transformeth him- " ſelf into an angel of light." *

About the ſame time a miniſter at Lynn, wrote againſt a number of baptiſt authors; but before he came to any of their arguments, he compares the admitting any *ſcruple* about infant baptiſm, to mother Eve's *admitting* the ſerpent's queſtion, *Hath God ſaid it?* and ſays, " Let my " advice be grateful to thee thus far, chriſtian " reader, to take heed of unneceſſary diſcourſes " and diſputes with *ſatanical ſuggeſtions*.—It is " not the firſt age and time that ſatanical ſug- " geſtions, *Thus it is written*, and *Thus ſaith the* " *Lord*, hath been propounded." †

Thus people were taught, to guard againſt the plaineſt ſcriptures that could be brought againſt infant baptiſm as being from ſatan; and Mr. Cobbet, near the cloſe of his book ‡ calls it a *a profane trick*, for any to turn their backs when

* Mr. Cotton on the *grounds and ends of the baptiſm of children*. Printed 1647. p. 3, 4.

† Mr. Thomas Cobbet's *vindication of the covenant, and church eſtate of children*. Printed 1648. Epiſtle to the reader. p. 8—9.

‡ Page 295.

when an infant was going to be ſprinkled, and *blaſphemy* to ſtile that practice antichriſtian.*

But alas! how dreadfully had ſatan *yielded* when he had *prevailed* with thoſe fathers, to take his weapons of *ſlander* and *violence*, to ſupport an ordinance that they could not find a *Thus ſaith the Lord* for! By theſe wiles he has prevailed, even to this day, ſo as to prejudice many in each denomination, againſt giving the other a fair hearing; and againſt embracing truths and duties that the others held.

3. Our moſt noted fathers owned themſelves to be *imperfect* (and left us evidence enough of it's being ſo) therefore they ſolemnly charged us

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* It was doubtleſs in conſequence of ſuch teaching as this that the following law was made in Boſton, 1644, viz. Although no human power be Lord over the faith, and conſciences of men, yet becauſe ſuch as bring in damnable hereſies, tending to the ſubverſion of the chriſtian faith, and deſtruction of the ſouls of men, ought duly to be reſtrained from ſuch notorious impieties.

It is therefore ordered and declared by the court; that if any chriſtian within this juriſdiction, ſhall go about to ſubvert and deſtroy the chriſtian faith and religion, by broaching and maintaining any damnable hereſies: as denying the immortality of the ſoul, or reſurrection of the body, or any ſin to be repented of in the regenerate,—or denying that Chriſt gave himſelf a ranſom for our ſins,—or ſhall openly condemn or oppoſe the baptizing of infants, or ſhall purpoſely depart the congregation, at the adminiſtration of that ordinance,—or ſhall endeavor to ſeduce others to ANY of the errors or hereſies above mentioned; every ſuch perſon continuing obſtinate therein, after due means of conviction, ſhall be SENTENCED TO BANISHMENT. General laws and *liberties* of the *Maſſachuſetts* colony, reviſed and re-printed by order of the general court at *Boſton*, *May* 15, 1672. p. 58, 59.

us, not to ſtop in what they had attained. This I before proved, Ex. p. 102. To which I ſhall now add the words of Mr. Devenport, who fled into Holland from perſecution before he came to our land; and where he "Bore witneſs a-"gainſt their *promiſcuous baptiſms*, which (in his "account) bordered very near upon a *profana-*"*tion* of that holy inſtitution. He obſerved, "That when a *reformation* of the church has "been brought about in any part of the world, "it has rarely been afterwards carried on any "ſtep farther than the *firſt reformers* did ſucceed "in their *firſt* endeavours. He obſerved that "as eaſily might the *ark* have been removed "from the mountains of *Ararat*, where it firſt "grounded, as a people get any ground in re-"formation, after and beyond the firſt remove "of the reformers. And this obſervation "quickned him to embark in a deſign of re-"formation, wherein he might have opportuni-"ty to drive things in the firſt eſſay, as near to "the precept and pattern of ſcripture as they "could be driven." * No wonder then that he bore witneſs here alſo, againſt their degenerating into *promiſcuous baptiſms* in 1662. The effects of which were ſo great by the year 1700, as to cauſe Dr. Mather, (as I before noted Ex. p. 19) to declare, that "If the begun *apoſtacy* ſhould "proceed as faſt for thirty years,—ſurely it "will come to that in New-England, that the "*moſt conſcientious* people therein will think "themſelves concerned to *gather churches out of* "*churches*." How then could my heart ſmite me

* Magnalia, B. III. p. 53.

me for having ſuch a concern! Rather muſt not your's ſmite you for ſaying, "The glory of "New-England departs, as the modern ſepera- "tion prevails; our *fathers being judges* ?" p. 112.

However, though our difference in ſentiments is great, yet tis time to come to the ſecond general head that we agree in; which is of relating *facts*. You ſay, "If they are *true*, he has not "*ſlandered* us; but if they are *falſe* he *has*: and "upon this hypotheſis I am ready to join iſſue." p. 111. With this I concur, only with the proviſo, that a due regard be paid to the golden rule in the *manner* of doing it; which naturally brings us to my ſecond *witneſs*, to prove your doing the contrary before: which was; that None can be willing to have the character of their *whole* denomination taken from evil perſons and things which may be pickt out among them. Then I quoted a paſſage out of your ſermons, to ſhew that you had done ſo to us. Ser. p. 142. Ex. p. 5. You now ſay the quotation "Shows that I "was not giving the character of the whole de- "nomination, but only of individuals." p. 20. Had you Sir, but have named the individuals, there would have been ſome ſenſe in this anſwer, but ſince you have not done it, we muſt have recourſe to a ſcripture inſtance. It is well known that when an open breach happens, either in church or ſtate, perſons of various characters and ſentiments will reſort to the new party. When the breach between Saul and David came to be known, *every one that was in diſtreſs, and every one that was in debt, and diſcontented, gathered themſelves unto* David, *and he became a Captain over them.*

them. Yet when ſuch a character of his party as this was given, viz. *There be many ſervants now a days that break away, every man from his maſter*, it is called *Railing*; and we are told that the perſon who gave it, therein acted according to his name, which ſignifies, a *fool* or *madman.* 1 Sam. 22. 2 and 25. 10, 14, 25.

My third witneſs was to ſhew how you had tried to deprive people of hearing and judging for themſelves, and had condemned us without a fair hearing. Ex. p. 5, 6. The ſum of your reply to it is, That what you delivered was by way of warning and advice to your own people, and ſay, "As for ſtrangers,—the whole fraternity "of ſeparates——they are entirely out of the "preſent queſtion" p. 20, 21. Yet Sir, you firſt ſpread printed propoſals of ſubſcription for your ſermons, through the country, notifying what you had therein written againſt the *ſeparates*; and then the books were publiſhed and diſperſed into all the four governments of New-England, and improved againſt our denomination in general, before I wrote againſt them, and I never heard of any one man, that took what you had ſaid, in the *limited* ſenſe you would now put upon it, till your reply came out. Which limited ſenſe you alſo now fly to, for a ſcreen from my charge, of your injuring the truth in relating of facts. p. 6. We muſt therefore come to particulars. And,

1. You are forced to own yourſelf guilty of two miſtakes about the ſeparate miniſter in your own town. One is, you ſaid the church ſilenced him: when in truth he ſilenced himſelf. The other is, concerning the length of

time

time that he was with them. You ſaid, *Leſs than a year*; which ſaying you are now forced to own was more than a year from the truth; tho' you try hard to make out that I was as much or more miſtaken than you was. p. 108. What you advance from the records of that church is entirely in my favour, excepting the date of Mr. Smith's excommunication, and you appear willing to render them doubtful, calling them, *records* or *minutes*; and what you chiefly rely upon, is a narrative you ſay, "Taken from Mr. "Smith's own *mouth*, as near as could be *related* "by a gentleman of integrity (whoſe letter is "in hand, and the *ſubſtance of* it is as follows.") p. 106. So that your chief authority to determine theſe *facts*, by your own account, is what was taken from an aged gentleman's memory, after above 20 years changes in this confuſed world, then wrote as near as another could remember, and a third gives the public the *ſubſtance* of what the ſecond had written. Now I will give you my authorities. One of Mr. Smith's brethren in the miniſtry, who lived by the way between Stonington and Mansfield, in giving me an account of the ſtate of religion in thoſe parts, wrote thus.

"As for Stonington, brother Smith hath for "ſome time denied to adminiſter among them, "and *now* hath concluded to return toMansfield, "and hath proceeded *ſo far* as to ſell atStoning-"ton, and bought at Mansfield; but the church "unanimouſly againſt his going." This was written on April 17, 1749. Your account makes it a year after his removal before his excomunication. Well my account of that is from

one

one of the council in which are theſe words. "When we were come, and had heard the "charge againſt him, as being a covenant-"breaker, in that he had forſaken the work God "had ſet him to do, namely, of preaching the "goſpel, and adminiſtring the ordinances there-"of; he was deſired to give his reaſons why he "had ſo done. He gave this anſwer, That "there was a want of fellowſhip, but to charge "it to the church, or any particular brother he "could not: and that was all, as I remember. "And then the church declared how they had "taken the ſteps preſcribed in the goſpel for "his recovery, and all proved ineffectual. We "all agreed that it was duty to proceed to pub-"lic cenſure and excommunication.—The day "was the 20th of July; but as to the effect, God "has it in his hands, and he orders all things "well." This was written the laſt of September, 1750; and I have both of theſe letters in their authors own hand-writing, to ſhew to any who deſire to ſee them. And let it be noted, that they were then wrote in way of intimate friend-ſhip, containing our own language concerning theſe affairs, and not with any deſign of publiſh-ing them to the world.

And by theſe accounts it appears, that he was ordained on *December* 10, 1746; but that after he had broken his ſolemn covenant to feed that flock of God, they took the goſpel ſteps with him, and as he did not *hear the church*, he was excommunicated *July* 20, 1750. Yet you de-clared in print, that "Him *they* choſe, ordain-"ed, *ſilenced*, caſt out of the church, and deli-

"vered

"vered up to ſatan, in *leſs* than *a year.*" Ser. p. 145. And now, twenty years after, you have collected a reproachful account of that affair from this dilinquent; and yet at the end of it (to avoid the charge of *ſtigmatizing* your brethren) you ſay, "I have ONLY rehearſed their "deeds—I have ONLY publiſhed their princi-"ples, ſpirit, practices, &c. which THEY *them-"ſelves* PROFESSED and acted over in the open "view of the world." p. 110. Though but two pages back you was forced to own to the world, that you had publiſhed things againſt them that were not true; and that you was led to do it by "Relying upon the *information* of *neigh-"bours*, and your own *underſtanding* of that "affair."

O Mr. *Fiſh!* how much guilt and trouble would you have eſcaped, if you had honeſtly retracted all that you have done againſt your brethren, through a *leaning to your own underſtanding*, and acting contrary to the character of Zion's citizens? Pſal. 15, 3. Iſa. 33. 15. May this be a warning and inſtruction to us all, in our future treatment of others!

2. You Sir charged us with *deſpiſing learning*, and ſaid we had *None* but *unlearned teachers*, and that we did not *uſe means* for obtaining *any better accompliſhments.* Ser. p. 165. And now in order to maintain your charge, you would limit the controverſy to the word *college*; whereas the words in your charge were, ANY *means*; *colleges*, AND *ſuperior ſchools.* And when I named two ſons of Mr. Joſiah Cleaveland of Canterbury, that he ſent to college, you aſſert that he did it "As

"As one of the ſtanding order, long enough "*before* he ſeparated." p. 14. while yet you tell us, that the *part* of the church he was of, on Jan. 27, 1743, "Declared againſt and went "*off from* their former uſage." p. 76. * And if you examine you may find, that he did not ſend the laſt of his ſons to college till September, 1744: and as they were both expelled that fall, for meeting with the church they were members of in a place *ſeparate* from the pariſh meeting-houſe; and which the heads of the college de-declared in print, that they were obliged to do by your laws. Ex. p. 42, 43. who could be ſo ſtupid as to ſend more ſons there to be expelled! When that expelling temper was a little over, I mentioned no leſs than ſix inſtances, out of but two towns, of ſeparates ſending their ſons to college. Ex. p. 43. But you preſume to queſtion their doing of it from right motives: and becauſe your party have prevailed to prejudice ſeveral of thoſe ſons againſt their fathers principles, you advance that as a great proof that their fathers are erroneous, p. 15. And as I ſpoke of ſome of our paſtors having ſkill in the learned tongues, you name one of them, who at his earneſt requeſt was diſmiſſed from Norwich, and you ſay he has "Diſtinguiſhed himſelf, to the "honor of truth & *goſpel order*, by a public reflec-"tion upon himſelf for his error, in promoting "ſeparations from the ſtanding churches, ſo "much as he has done; and was ſome months "ago

* The truth I ſuppoſe is, that the church had not *explicitly* declared for either platform till then, when a majority voted for Cambridge, and againſt Saybrook, which was a cauſe of their ſeparation.

"ago ordained by regular ministers, over a re-
"gular church and congregation in Plainfield."
p. 15.

Reply, I learn that the ministers did extort from him some general reflections upon separations; yet the *order* that he was settled in was; dropping the old *constitution*, and beginning anew by a verbal relation of experiences; not using the civil law for his support, and not using notes in his preaching. And I am informed, that he lately assisted in ordaining a minister in your vicinity, who appears to be a man of *spiritual gifts*, though he has no more of college-learning than we had. And whether this can convince us that we were wrong in separating from *your constitution*, that we might introduce *such gospel order* (and which now spreads in your colony) let the reader judge! You close this article with telling your readers, that you had *sufficiently proved* your charge against us, but if any thing more is required, the *spirit* and *language* of my book may supply the place of *many witnesses*. p. 15. I am content to refer the matter to that test; for I trust it has appeared, and will appear to the end, that God has given me a real regard for *knowledge* and *truth*, but a hatred of *ignorance* and *sophistry*.

3. In opening your constitution I mentioned the trouble that Norwich representatives met with for their opposing their ministers attempts to bring in the Saybrook scheme, and said that, After many councils, and much fatigue, a *sum of money* prevailed with that minister to quit his place. Ex. p. 29. You now say, The sum of money was *only* for his temporal interest in the town. p. 72. To which I reply, that I had no thought

thought of blaming him for ſelling his eſtate there, though I had an account of that from the ſame hands that I had the other; but as I find from the town records, that upon reſigning his office, he made a demand of old arearages, beyond what the town judged to be any ways his due, I ſuppoſe that from thence it was taken that a certain ſum was given him to quit his place. This is the cleareſt light I can as yet gain in the caſe. I am willing to have every miſtake rectified, and that things may appear as they are. Had that been your temper Sir, would you have ſaid A *council*. p. 72? as if he had been diſmiſſed by the calling only of *one* council; when in truth they had them year after year, from ſoon after the introduction of the Saybrook plan in 1708, till that miniſter reſigned his office on Auguſt 31, 1716. And would not an impartial diſpoſition alſo have prevented, a long deſcant that you there add, upon Mr. Tennant's *language*, in order to turn it againſt us; when I expreſsly told you, that it was his *reaſoning* and not his language that I approved of? Ex. p. 33. At the ſame time you paſs over in ſilence what I brought againſt you from Mr. Edwards, which I as plainly told you I preferred before the other. Is this the *learning* you plead ſo much for!

4. You ſpend ſix pages upon the facts that I related concerning Canterbury, on which you reflect that "'Tis ſad that Mr. *B.* lays no "reſtraint on his pen!" p. 79. And you ſay, "This may ſerve as a general caution to "his readers, how they receive and rely upon "his account of things in other parts of his "book," p. 80. And give no hint that I took

took every article which you controvert, from an author in that town, who was acquainted with all theſe affairs, and publickly appealed to miniſters and courts for the truth of his narrative; and which I never heard diſputed till your Reply came out, while you keep your author's name concealed, who condemns me upon his present *rememberance*. p. 77. As far as I could now gain light from the ſeveral accounts that are given, I have corrected and opened the true ſtate of that ſeparation; but whether I can with ſafety retract any particular circumſtance that is now diſputed, which was publiſhed 20 years ago, by a man of credit that I was acquainted with, only upon the *memory* of one that I knew not, let the reader judge! And I ſhall cloſe theſe facts with remarking, that you catch at my ſaying, *After* the church withdrew, the conſociation was called and ordained Mr. Cogſwell, Ex. p. 38. as a proof that they did not *cauſe that diviſion*. Rom. 16. 17. 18. p. 84. But Sir, I proved by the plain teſtimony of the heads of your college, that his *preaching to the pariſh* (which cauſed the church to withdraw) was *with the ſpecial direction* of thoſe miniſters. Ex. p. 42. And what a miſerable ſhift is it, for you to catch at the word *after*, to prove that they did nothing before!

And now Sir, let us ſum up the whole affair. You have accuſed me with uſing falſe arguments, but how have you proved it? The firſt that I obſerve, is from my naming ſome of our miniſters, who had been men of note in the places where they lived; you repreſent that from thence I argued, that they had college-learning

(as

(as if all learning was confined to colleges) and you form a ridiculous ſyllogiſm for me accordingly. p. 13. But whether you or I are rendered moſt ridiculous by it, let the reader judge. Again, when I obſerved that you *miſtook* the rule itſelf through your book; my argument from it was, That nothing leſs could be expected, than falſe actings upon a falſe rule. Ex. p. 5. That is when a man is ſeduced into a *crooked* way, it cannot be expected that he will go *ſtrait* in it. But you repreſent my argument to be, that you could not have an *honeſt heart*. p. 19. Notwithſtanding I expreſsly ſaid, "I deſire always to "avoid the evil of judging the *counſels* of others "*hearts*, and to judge righteouſly according to "what is made manifeſt." And I went on to tell what I ſuppoſed it was that *blinded* you. Ex. p. 5, 6. And I ſtill ſuppoſe that you have been thus blinded, and moved to uſe ſhifts and evaſions to try to clear yourſelf, and unreaſonably to cenſure your opponent. Thus when I ſaid, you had condemned *us* without a fair hearing; you reply "They were out of my juriſdiction. "I had no buſineſs to call *them* to a hearing." p. 21. As if I had ſpoken of a *perſonal audience*; when you know that I expreſsly referred to what we had *publiſhed* to the world, which you had paid no regard to. Ex. p. 6. So when I mentioned what the falſe teachers at Corinth *gloried* in, and (to confirm it) what the Corinthians *ſuffered* from them. Ex. p. 25, 26. You ſhuffle the matter over, till you would make your readers believe, that I held, that thoſe teachers *glorying* was in what the ſaints *ſuffered* from them. And though you will not allow that

Chriſt,

Christ gave any orders to his apostles to preach freely, yet you have proved that Paul did preach so; and you carry it, that his design therein was to "cut off occasion of *offence*." p. 68, 69. But I have no thought of his being afraid of *offending* those teachers; for what he was evidently concerned about was to prevent any occasion or handle for them to do mischief. Once more, When I observed that the epistles to Timothy and Titus were to direct ministers concerning their behaviour *in the church*, not *over it*. I immediately went on to explain my meaning; and that by *over it*, I meant a distinct power or jurisdiction *above* the church, instead of acting *with* them in trying ministers. Ex. p. 39, 41. But you Sir, quote several texts wherein the word *over* is used to describe ministers work as *watchmen* or *guides* to the church, which perfectly agrees with my sense of the word *in* it, as being *leaders* therein; while you go on, (as before observed) to assert, that what the *Spirit saith unto the churches* was "spoken to and *of* the ministers;" and proceed till you represent, that I held that letters of commendation went *to* and *from* the *brotherhood* and *not* the *ministers*, though I plainly said the church *with* them. p. 80—83.

And so I think it is lamentably evident, that you have proceeded in a crooked way through these writings, both as to arguments, and facts: while I have not been able to discover that I have used one false argument against you; and the chief mistakes that I have found are, my writing The form, instead of A form of Godliness; and my being misinformed about one circumstance at Norwich.

As

As for temper; you talk much of my want of *modeſty*, but the two plaineſt inſtances to ſhew what you mean by it, that I have obſerved, are my appearing ſo boldly as I have, againſt you about the learned tongue, and againſt the Windham miniſters upon the parable of the tares. p. 55. 87. which caſes as they have been plainly ſtated I leave with the reader. But you ſay, I have uſed "Unſufferable PERTNESS, ſurpriſing CONFIDENCE, "and a haughty air of ASSURANCE." p. 123. To which I reply, that I have ſo often ſeen people loſt in a wilderneſs of words, ſo as to take wrong for right, and right for wrong, that I have endeavoured to come as *pert* and direct to the caſe in hand as I could; and as the ſufferings of Chriſt's ſervants formerly, cauſed many of the *brethren* to wax *confident*, boldly to ſpeak the word *without fear*; I ſhall not deny my belief, that this unworthy creature has been freely favoured with ſomething of the ſame influence; and alſo with a meaſure of that *aſſurance* of *underſtanding* in goſpel myſteries, which the apoſtle was earneſt we ſhould have, to guard us againſt *philoſophy and vain deceit*. Phil. 1. 14. Col. 2. 1—8. If my confidence has in any inſtance gone beyond my evidence, I am ſorry you had not convinced me of it. You add, that "This offence "is aggravated by a total want of *good manners*, "and *civil language*, through a great part of "your book." p. 123. To which I ſhall ſay, that though I never thought myſelf a pattern of manners, yet in theſe affairs I'll venture to compare notes with you. In your appendix where you profeſſedly ſet yourſelf to collect out of my whole book, *expreſſions* moſt *void of decency*, the hardeſt

hardeſt names you have found are theſe, viz. I cloſed my remarks upon your applying the learning that our Saviour received by the holy Ghoſt, Iſa. 50. 4. to what is *learned* in your colleges, with ſaying, Did any *Phariſee* ever abuſe ſcripture to impoſe upon people, worſe than this? Ex. p. 44. And when you appealed to the *Lord of conſcience*, whether it was not *covetouſneſs*, accompanied with *wilfulneſs* and *diſobedience*, all founded on *weakneſs*, rather than *pure conſcience* that induced the ſeparates to refuſe to pay your ſalary? Ser. p. 164, I ſaid, Does he or his brethren take Paul's advice and direction, about dealing with *weak brethren*? or rather is not the liberty which they would allow, juſt the ſame with *Pharaoh's*,—*Go ye, ſerve the Lord; only let your flocks and herds be ſtayed?* Ex. p. 80.

Theſe are the two plaineſt proofs, in their "native dreſs," of my want of good manners, that you have found in my whole book, and both of them delivered by way of query: whereas I have already referred you to one paſſage (among many) in your ſermons, wherein you Sir, as a public miniſter, deliver it not as a queſtion, but a ſtrong aſſertion, that "'Twas a *falſe ſpirit* and a "*falſe religion* that made the ſeparation among "US, a device of *ſatan* that old *ſerpent* the *devil*."

"And in your preſent piece, which tells us in its introduction, that "There is not the leaſt need of "one *bitter word*, nor unkind *reflection*, nor can "there ANY *purpoſe* be anſwered thereby, but "*venting the corruption of nature*," p. 2. Yet in order to ward off the ſentences I had quoted from thoſe eminent authors, Owen and Franck, you ſay,——"Our real character is as different "from that which he has ſet up, as the true "pro-

" proteſtant churches are from the antichriſ-
" tian: or as the apoſtle *Peter* was from the
" *Pope* of Rome; or the gentle *Barnabas* and
" *Paul*, from Mr. *Backus*. And I know not of a
" more ſtriking contraſt." p. 102. Rather you ſhould have ſaid, you did not then think of any; for a more ſtriking contraſt came afterwards to mind, and then out it comes; which is that between the *Arch-angel* and the *devil*. Yea, and all this has not *vented nature* enough; but (as if the witch of Endor was come again, to bring up the dead to condemn the living) you aſſert that, *I am compared* BY Mr. *Flavel* to animals, too naucious for dogs! And you go on to tell me, that all this " correction is *gentle* compared with the " offence." p. 124, 125.

If all theſe *words* are gentle, I know not what you would have more but *blows* from the ſecular arm. However it all ſerves ſtill further to open the caſe we are upon. It had got to be cuſtomary in our land, to have miniſters *perſons* ſo much in *admiration*, as to allow them almoſt all the power in the admiſſion both of miniſters and members, and to treat them with ſuch reverence as ſcarcely to oppoſe them in any thing. Therefore when ſome were raiſed up to appear boldly againſt their corruptions, they had recourſe to many ſhifts and evaſions, to hide the true ſtate of the controverſy, while they *vented their natures* as you have done, by calling the worſt names, and uſing the moſt odious compariſons, that their *learning* afforded. And I am bold in it, that ſuch kind of *manners* from men of your ſort of education, was not only a great cauſe of our ſeparation, but alſo has done more towards prejudiceing peoples minds againſt college-learning, than all thoſe you call lay-teachers could have done it they had

tried. And had I not been clearly convinced hereof, and ſeen what ſtumbling-blocks had been laid thereby, and alſo found the weight of that command, *Go through, go through the gates*, &c. Iſa. 62. 10. I ſhould by no means have purſued theſe matters ſo far as I have done. But here you tell us, you will leave it to the judicious reader, "whether he has ſkilfully and faithfully "done the ſervice; or whether he has not caſt "*twenty ſtones* at the *prophets* of the Lord, his "*miniſters*, to *one* that he has removed out of the "way of *his people*?" p. 17. As I have ſeriouſly conſidered of this affair, I freely join in referring of it to all chriſtian people; and if any can ſhew me that I have caſt one ſtone at any ſuch perſon, my concern ſhall be to improve the firſt opportunity that preſents, to make them the beſt ſatisfaction I can. I know that my aim has not been againſt any human perſon, but againſt *Jezebel* which calleth herſelf a *propheteſs*, that has been *ſuffered* to *teach* among the churches, and to *ſeduce Chriſt's ſervants*. And I deſire never to ſpare her in the leaſt, till ſhe ſinks like a *ſtone*, never to *riſe* more. Jer. 51. 64. Rev. 2. 20. By which I underſtand all that *myſtery of iniquity* by which any are *ſeduced*, to ſet up or gratify ſelf under the cloak of religion, with methods of *deceit* and *cruelty* towards others. Which methods are uſed by ſome to as bad purpoſes, under the name of Great *ſpirituality*, as they are by others under a pretence of *learning*. And if a Peter or a Barnabas, are carried away with *diſſimulation*, they ought to be withſtood *to the face*; and the ſo doing, argues not any want of reſpect, either to their perſons, or their office, but the contrary. Gal. 2. 11—14.

You Sir, talk much of how you and your brethren ſtood by the work and cauſe of God when we ſeparated, and ſay, The breach of *peace* began on our ſide, p. 18, 126. But ſurely the nature of his work, is to bring ſouls to the knowledge of their loſt condition, and of the only way of help through Jeſus Chriſt, and to follow him in all his ways, and not to follow the *voice of ſtrangers*. And we followed the miniſters who were friends to that work, till they turned and ſaid a *confederacy* with the enemies of it, and joined in the manner you have done, to bear down all that would not conform to the *conſtitution* which I have now expoſed; ſo that we were bro't to the neceſſity, of either yielding to that *yoke of bondage*, or elſe to ſeparate from them. And the ſame argument was often uſed then that you uſe now, viz. That the ſeven churches of Aſia were as corrupt as your's, who ('twas ſaid) were called to reformation, but not to a ſeparation. But how falacious is this argument? We know they were firſt called to a reformation; to *repent and do their firſt works*, and not to ſuffer *deceitful* teachers among them, who like *Balaam* loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs. And their Lord declared to them, that if they did not *repent quickly*, he would *remove the candleſtick out of his place*, and *fight againſt them with the ſword of his mouth*. Rev. 2. 5, 16. Which I believe he has done, and is now doing to your churches.

Theſe things I leave to your ſolemn conſideration, deſiring always to take the ſame advice myſelf, and reſt, dear Sir, your hearty well-wiſher,

Middleborough,
Oct. 21, 1772. *Iſaac Backus.*

APPENDIX,

Containing a few remarks upon the controverſy about baptiſm; occaſioned by Mr. *Eliſha Fiſh*'s late ſermon from Gen. IX. 27.

DR. *Gill* obſerves, that there has been ſcarce any thing wrote by us theſe fifty years but in our own defence; our Pedobaptiſt brethren being continually the aggreſſors, and firſt movers of the controverſy; they ſeem as if they were not ſatisfied with what has been done on their ſide; and therefore are always attempting, either to put the controverſy upon a new foot, or to throw the old arguments into a new form; and even ſay the ſame things over and over again, to make their minds, and the minds of their people eaſy, if poſſible. But this is our caſe; if we reply to what is written againſt us, then we are litigious perſons, and lovers of controverſy; though we only riſe up in our own vindication, for which ſurely we are not to be blamed; and if we make no reply, then what is written is unanſwerable by us, and we are triumphed over.* Which obſervation is as applicable to our country

* Dr. Gill's anſwer to a piece called, *The baptiſm of infants a reaſonable ſervice, founded upon ſcripture and apoſtolic tradition.* p. 3, 4.

try as to that in which it was wrote; for Mr. Joſeph Fiſh firſt began the controverſy with us in his nine ſermons; yet becauſe I, at the importunity of friends, made ſome reply to him, he accuſes me with ſetting up myſelf as cenſor general, &c. And 'tis likely the ſame temper will renew the accuſation, for my yielding to a like importunity, in taking ſome notice of the pamphlet before me; which is intitled, "Japheth "dwelling in the tents of Shem; or infant bap- "tiſm vindicated, in a diſcourſe, the ſubſtance "of which was delivered in Upton, January 5, "1772; with objections anſwered, by *Eliſha* "*Fiſh*, A. M." I ſay, ſome notice; for I ſhall not go over all the arguments again, which I have already anſwered in the foregoing diſcourſe, but refer the reader thereto, and ſhall now only make a few remarks on their general manner of managing the controverſy.

After Job's long diſpute with his friends, Jehovah appeared with this ſolemn demand, *Who is this that darkeneth counſel by* WORDS *without* KNOWLEDGE! Job. 38. 2. And a very great evil that the Corinthians were reproved for, was their uttering *words* that were not *eaſy to be underſtood*, but like a trumpet which gave an *uncertain ſound*. 1 Cor. 14. 8, 9. Yet one of the greateſt maſters of learning in our nation obſerves, that commonly the moſt *material words* in controverſy, upon which the argument turns, are ſo uſed; though ſays he, "one who ſhould ſpeak "thus, in the affairs and buſineſs of the world, "and call 7 ſometimes 8, and ſometimes nine, "as beſt ſerved his advantage, would preſently "have clapped upon him one of the two names

"men

" men conſtantly are diſguſted with ; and yet in " arguing and learned conteſts, the ſame ſort of " proceeding paſſes commonly for wit and " learning : but to me, it appears a greater diſ- " honeſty, than the miſplacing of counters in " the caſting up a debt, and the cheat the " greater, by how much truth is of greater con- " cernment and value than money."*

With grief of heart we often ſee this to be the caſe, with the advocates for infant baptiſm. Could they once be brought to a diſtinct and ſteady meaning in three words, the controverſy would ſoon come to an end. I mean the words, covenant, grace and promiſe. It is evident that in the old teſtament, to be in Abraham's *covenant*, meant the ſame as to be members of that church, and under obligation to conform to all its ordinances. Natural birth brought his ſeed into the church, and being in, all their males muſt needs be circumciſed as ſoon as they were *clean*. Levit. 12. 2, 3. *And all their males* were required to keep the paſſover in the firſt month, if *clean* and not in a journey ; and if that were the caſe, they might not neglect it any longer than the next month, upon the penalty of being *cut off from their people*, Gen. 17. 14. Num. 9. 9—13. Deut. 16. 16. and do any hold the *covenant* to be ſo with us ? Indeed ſome of our moſt noted fathers ſay, " We know of NO ſtronger argu- " ment for infant baptiſm than this, That " *church members* are to be baptized."† And from the ſcriptures juſt now cited, 'tis evident, that

* Lock's eſſay on underſtanding. B. 3. C. 10. ſ. 5.

† Magnalia B. 5. p. 79.

that Abraham's ſeed *born in the church*, and therefore muſt be *cut off* from it, if they were not circumciſed at the appointed time; and muſt we then take our opponents, by *grace* to mean *nature*; * and that *nature* brings their ſeed into the covenant of *grace*! And that though the goſpel church was firſt conſtituted of members who were *born not of blood* nor of the *will of man* but of God. John. 1. 13! yet that ſince the eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity, *blood* and the *will of man*, can bring members into the church! But why then do not all theſe members come to the ordinance of the ſupper, as the Jews did to the paſſover? our author's anſwer is, That the paſſover was temporary and *legal*, † and he ſays, "If "it had been the will of the great Head of the "church, not to have appointed any goſpel paſſo-"ver or holy ſupper for his church, that would "not have altered the privileges of the *promiſes* "relating to baptiſm in Abraham's covenant, "one way or the other." p. 37. 38.

To which I reply, that if he had not appointed baptiſm nor the ſupper, it would not have altered the *promiſes* to Abraham, for there is no mention of either of thoſe ordinances therein; but 'tis certain that the promiſes to him did inſure the continuance of the church in the line of his poſterity till the *ſeed Chriſt* ſhould come, *to whom the promiſes were made*. Gal. 3. 16. And till then their eſtabliſhment in all the *legal ceremonies* was

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* Directly contrary to having, NO *confidence in the fleſh*. Phil. 3. 3.

† Circumciſion was as *temporary* and *legal* as the paſſover, and is much oftener ſpoken of as ſuch. Rom. 2. 25.* Gal. 5. 2, 3. and 6. 13.

as God promiſed him. Deut. 29. 13. But when Chriſt came, all the children of Abraham's *fleſh*, who believed not in him, were broken off from the church of God, while the *children of promiſe*, the *election of grace* were retained therein; and a *new covenant* was made with them *not according* to that made with their fathers; and many of the children of Japheth were *perſuaded*, and graffed in among them, and *ſtood* there *by faith*. Rom. 9. 7. 8 & 11. and 5. 17. 20. Heb. 8. All which may plainly teach us, that to be in *covenant*, means the ſame as being in the church, both in the old teſtament, and in the new; and that *grace* means *free ſalvation* by Chriſt, whom Abraham and other believers looked to, through the ſhadows of the law, and who is now beheld with open face through the glaſs of the goſpel; and that the bleſſings that God *promiſed* to Abraham, which are come on the Gentiles, are *forgiveneſs of ſins*, and the influences of the holy *ſpirit*; which *promiſe is given to them that believe*. Acts 2. 38, 39, 41. Gal. 3. 13, 14, 22.

This is evidently the ſtrait line of truth, but the crooked way of *deceitful* philoſophy and men's *traditions*, as it carried Peter and Barnabas away with *diſſimulation*, ſo it has carried this author (let him be ever ſo pious) into the following evils.

1. To *add* to God's word; for that word calls the covenant that formed Abraham's family into a church, *The covenant of circumciſion*. Acts 7. 8. And as all know that circumciſion is out of date, it would appear the evident conſequence, that the covenant which it gave name to is alſo *taken away*, and a better one *eſtabliſhed* in it's room. Heb. 8, 6. and 10. 9. Had not men preſumed

into

to add the name *grace* to it, on which addition moſt of their arguments for infant baptiſm turn. And to ſupport this they make another addition; for where the word ſays of Abraham, *He received* the *ſign* of circumciſion, a *ſeal* of the righteouſneſs of *the faith which he had.* Rom. 4. 11. This writer is ſo daring as to aſſert, that Abraham "has ſet us the moſt public example in *applying* "the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith to his in-"fant ſeed, at God's command; which ſeal now "is baptiſm." p. 29. In which, unleſs he can make Abraham's *receiving* what *he had* faith in, to be the ſame as *applying* to others what they had no faith about, he will be found guilty of adding to God's word. Yea he not only adds what is not there, but 2. He alſo denies what is there; for he over and over denies, there being any *expreſs* word againſt bringing infants into the church now, as they did among the Jews. p. 13, 33, 39, 40. Notwithſtanding God's expreſs declaration, That the new covenant is *not according* to the covenant that took in profeſſors by *houſholds*, and that the extent of the new covenant is, that ALL ſhall *know him*, from the LEAST to the greateſt. Heb. 8. 11. Which declaration our great author tries to evade by aſſerting, That the apoſtle here did not refer to the covenant of Abraham, "which had the token of cir-"cumciſion annexed to it." p. 15. And though he owns that the uſual language of the new-teſtament is, repent and believe and be baptized, yet he ſays, "We do not diſcover the leaſt oppoſiti-"on to the practice of infant baptiſm, which "takes place and follows upon our viſible and "credible profeſſion." p. 34. But ſtay; how

does

does it follow? Abraham had no warrant to circumciſe one perſon, but ſuch as were either *born in his houſe*, or *bought with his money*. Gen. 17. 13, 23. The firſt order that was given to bring *ſtrangers* to circumciſion by *houſholds*, was on *the day* that Iſrael came out of Egypt, Exod. 12. 48. and the covenant which Jeremiah propheſied of, and which Paul applies to the goſpel diſpenſation is placed in *expreſs* oppoſition to what was done on *that day*. Therefore all thoſe who bring any family to baptiſm upon the faith of the head of it, act directly againſt theſe ſcriptures; and in order to keep themſelves in countenance in that way, they go on, 3. To abuſive treatment of thoſe who will not go with them. This writer repreſents that our ſentiments, would make Paul to contradict himſelf, which none but a *prejudiced* or *infidel* mind will admit. p. 16. He tells us of *incredible preſumption*; of oppoſing the *exact fulfilment* of his text, and that thoſe who "oppoſe "infant baptiſm, are in danger of *fighting a-* "*gainſt God* (at unawares)." p. 23. 24. Of raiſing an unanſwerable objection in the minds of the Jews; and of too much reſembling *them* in *their unbelief*. p. 25. Of offering *violence to the ſcriptures*. p. 28. Of *horrible* ſentiments. p. 38. And all to enforce his advice, to *ſhun* the doctrines and practices of ſuch as *oppoſe* his opinion about *children*. p. 39. Nay all this is not enough, but 4. He muſt add one of the worſt errors of popery; I mean that of the ſacraments *conferring grace by the operation or work done*.* For

* Here note, I don't charge Mr. *F.* with knowingly holding this error; he declares the contrary. p. 38. and would have it, that when the fathers called baptiſm *regene-*

as a full evidence for infant baptiſm, he from Mr. Boſtwick, gives us Origen's words that "It "is becauſe *by* the ſacrament of baptiſm the *pol-* "*lution of our birth is taken away*, that infants "are baptized." p. 44. Origen is the firſt man that any of them have ever been able to produce, who expreſsly appeared for infant baptiſm, and his argument to ſupport it is, becauſe he ſays, BY it the *pollution of our birth is taken away*. But Tertullian in the ſame age oppoſed the practice, as our author owns, p. 45. And yet in p. 47, he would have his readers believe, that there was "No diſpute about the point," for more than a thouſand years after the apoſtles. And then to bind the whole he ſays, "Infant "baptiſm is valid, and agreeable to the inſtitu-

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ration, they uſed the thing ſignified for the ſign. p. 43. But the caſe is evidently not ſo. I readily own that circumciſion under the law, and baptiſm under the goſpel, were both ſigns of Chriſt's death, and of regeneration by his grace; and as Abraham had the thing ſignified before he received circumciſion, it was a ſeal to him of the faith he had; and at God's command he applied the ſign of what was then future, to ſuch as had not the thing ſignified wrought in them: but 'tis in vain for any to ſay, They ſtand to act for their children as Abraham did for his, unleſs they can prove that a *national church* is to ſpring from them, and that a Saviour is hereafter to come out of it. Baptiſm is not a type of a future crucifixion of the Saviour, but a token of that great event which is paſt, and that we *are crucified with him*, and HAVE *put him on*. Gal. 2. 20. and 3. 27. And to put this ſign upon our children, unleſs we imagine with Origen, that BY it the inward change is wrought, is to do ſo much toward making our children hypocrites. The Weſtminſter-catechiſm calls baptiſm, a ſign of our *engrafting into Chriſt*, therefore to put this ſign on any before we have ſome goſpel evidence that they have been made *dead to the law*, what is it but *adultery*! Rom. 7. 3. 4.

" tion of Chriſt; or elſe there neither is nor CAN
" BE any regular baptiſm in the church, to the
" end of the world. p. 48. That is, If in times of antichriſtian darkneſs, they did *change the ordinance*, and the change did prevail ſo far that *none uprightly and openly appeared* againſt it, then we can never reform and come right again! Whether a ſtronger argument than this againſt reformation, was ever brought out of the ſmoke of the pit or not, is left to the readers judgment!

2. The *myſtery of iniquity* began to work in the apoſtles days, 2 Theſ. 2. 7. and had prevailed ſo far when infant baptiſm was introduced, as alſo to bring infants to the Lord's ſupper, as a *ſaving ordinance*: and likewiſe to uſe the ſign of the croſs, Godfathers, renouncing the devil and his works, exorciſms, dipping the head thrice in reference to the three perſons in the Trinity, conſecrating the water, anointing with oil, &c. at baptiſm; for all which Dr. Gill has produced plain and *expreſs* proofs, out of the ſame fathers that are quoted for infant baptiſm, and of as *early* date; and he obſerves, that the reaſonings for infant baptiſm that are uſed " From the teſtimony of
" the antients, the *difficulty* of an innovation, and
" the *eaſineſs* of its detection, may be applied to
" all and each of theſe rites. Wherefore whoever receives infant baptiſm upon the foot of
" *apoſtolic tradition*, and upon ſuch *proof* and
" *evidence* as is given of it, if he is an *honeſt* man;
" I ſay again, if he is an *honeſt* man, he ought
" to give into the practice of ALL theſe rites
" and

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* Iſa. 24. 5. Micah 7. 2.

" and uſages."* But, ſaid one of our baptiſt mi-
" niſters 130 years ago, concerning the reformers,
" They can aſſume and erect a church, take in
" and caſt out members, elect and ordain officers,
" and adminiſter the *ſupper*, and all anew;
" without any looking after *ſucceſſion*, any fur-
" ther than the ſcriptures : but as for *baptiſm*,
" they muſt have that *ſucceſſively* from the ap-
" poſtles, though it comes through the hands of
" pope *Joan*. What is the cauſe of this, that
" men can do all from the WORD but bap-
" tiſm!" †

Dr. Owen tells us, that the proteſtants in their ſeparation from the church of Rome, proceeded upon theſe *general principles*. " 1. That the word
" of God is a perfect rule of faith and religious
" worſhip. 2. That chriſtian people were not
" tied up to blind obedience unto church guides,
" but were not only at liberty, but alſo obliged
" to judge for themſelves, as unto all things
" that they were to believe and practiſe in reli-
" gion and the worſhip of God. 3. That there
" was not any catholic, viſible, organical govern-
" ing church, traduced by *ſucceſſion* into that of
" Rome, whence all power and order was to be
" *derived*.—They could acknowledge NO ſuch
" church ſtate in the Roman church, nor the
" derivation of ANY power and order from it. So
" far as there is a *declenſion* from *this principle*,
" ſo far the cauſe of *the reformation* is weakned,
" and

* Dr Gill's anſwer to the piece called, *Infant baptiſm a reaſonable ſervice*, &c. p. 24——34.

† Croſby's hiſtory. vol. 1. p. 104.

" and the principal reaſon of *ſeparation* from the " Roman church is rejected." *

From whence I leave the reader to judge, what cauſe we had for a new ſeparation; and ſhall cloſe the whole with obſerving, That denying the intire depravity of nature, and the abſolute ſovereignty of grace, and holding that the promiſes threof are connected with the deſires and doings of natural men, and that their final ſtate turns upon their well or ill improving their free-will power, and that a man may finally fall from grace received, are the dregs of popery, which ſince the reformation have been called Arminianiſm; while excluding, or diſregarding the authority of the divine law, is Antinomianiſm: both of which names the principle of beliver's baptiſm has often been reproached with; while yet we are conſtantly complained of becauſe we will not be either Arminians or Antinomians, or both of them. For what is all the noiſe we hear, of our children's being in covenant, or elſe that if they die in infancy we can have no hope of them, without it be from the uncovenanted (i. e. ſovereign) mercy of God? And that (either by birth or by men's *works* in baptizing of them) they are in the *covenant of grace* and children of *promiſe*, † till by their own doings

* Dr. Owen on the *original of evangelical churches*. p. 291, 294, 297.

† Our author refers to ſeveral ancient promiſes to God's people, of the pouring of his Spirit on their offspring, which he compares with Acts 2. 39, and ſays, " The promiſe is " the immediate privilege of believing parents, and their " children, as it's expreſſed in the preſent time, and it " may

doings they *fall* therefrom: I ſay what is all this but the relicks of Arminianiſm? Yea, relicks abſolutly inconſiſtent with the apoſtolic doctrine, of *all* being *under ſin*, and *under the curſe*, till they are *delivered* by Chriſt, and *receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith*. Rom. 3. 9. Gal. 3. 10, 13, 14. I believe God can and ſometimes does ſanctify infants from the womb: but evidence that they have faith is neceſſary before baptiſm.

On the other hand, our apponents hold it to be the law of Chriſt, that all believers ſhould baptize their children, and yet will call thoſe *regular* baptiſts, who will join in their churches, without bringing their infants, or acting in the baptiſm themſelves, as they believe the law of Chriſt directs. And though our opponents hold with us, that it is the law of Chriſt, that all ſhould be baptized before they come to the Lord's table; yet many of them accuſe us of rigidneſs, of unchurching all but ourſelves, &c. only becauſe we will

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" may not be ſo divided as to be the immediate privilege " of the believing parents, and the future privilege of their " children when they ſhall believe." p. 30. But he has forgot, that this promiſe in the preſent time was proclaimed, not to believing but guilty parents, who had ſaid, *His blood be on us, and on our children*. Mat. 27. 25. *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized*. And doubtleſs there were both parents and children that *received the promiſe* on that day; and in after days, thoſe which the Lord added to his church, were *ſuch as ſhould be ſaved*. Acts. 2. 41, 47. Compare this with Peter's limitation of the *promiſe* to *even as many as God ſhall call*, and what warrant can we have from all this, to baptize any till we have ſome evidence that they are *called* ſo as to *receive the promiſe of the Spirit*, unleſs we will dare to add to God's word!

will not meet ſuch perſons there, as we cannot believe in our conſcience to be baptized according to our Lord's direction. If any on our ſide are found to uſe any deceit or violence toward the other denomination, or any method contrary to ſpeaking the truth in love, let them be corrected or puniſhed according to the demerit of their crime; but if the truth breaks up churches, it highly concerns all that belong to them, to awake and conſider what churches they are. We have two ſorts of ſeparation deſcribed in holy writ: One is produced by an exalting of ſelf above others; the other by ſuch an adherence to divine rule as to part with thoſe who will not conform to it. Iſa. 65. 5. Pſalm 119. 115. And unleſs our pedobaptiſt fathers and brethren can convince us that HE who was *faithful* in his houſe, and worthy of more glory than Moſes, has yet left things at ſuch looſe ends, as only to appoint the uſe of water in the ſacred name, without determining whether it ſhould be by ſprinkling, pouring or burying, but has left that to be determined by men's conſciences: I ſay till they can convince us of this, all their noiſe about the evil of re-baptiſing and cloſe communion, cannot ſatisfy our minds, that we can duly regard the law of Chriſt, if we come to his table with any who have not been *buried with him in baptiſm.*

I am ſenſible that this author, after owning that in ſcripture we "Have *no expreſs* account "about the baptizing of the infant ſeed of be-"lievers:" p. 32. yet tells us of "ſtraining at a "gnat and ſwallowing a camel," becauſe we will not

not admit that practice upon the covenant of circumcision. p. 33. But as 'tis evident to us, that men have *changed the ordinance*, from burying to ſprinkling; and from thoſe who are taught and believe, to applying it to ſubjects before they are capable of being taught, without any divine warrant at all; let this change be called a gnat or a camel, or what elſe they pleaſe, yet I truſt it will ever appear too big to be ſwallowed, by thoſe who duly attend to the orders of our great Lord and Maſter, which are; "Go ye "and *teach* all nations, baptizing them in the "name of theFather, and of the Son, and of the "holy Ghoſt; teaching them to OBSERVE ALL "THINGS, WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED "you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto "the end of the world. AMEN."

The

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2. Of the manner of building churches. Chriſt has inſtituted none but particular churches, which are tobe built up by perſons giving a verbal account of a work of God's Spirit on their ſouls, to the church, in order to their being received as members. p. 17—23. (Ex. p. 17—19, 31, 49, 50. Teſtimonies to confirm this, from Dr. Owen, p. 18, 59—60. Capt. Clap, p. 54. Mr. Eliot, p. 55. Mr. Shepard, p. 57, 95. Mr. Mitchel, p. 19, 51, 56. Dr. Mather, p. 17—19.)

3. Of organizing churches. The power both of approbating and ordaining miniſters proved to be in the churches, and none have a right to act therein only as they are appointed thereto by the church. p. 23—33. (Ex. p. 16, 24, 40, 41, 60—63. This confirmed by the example of our fathers, p. 16, 52. and by Dr. Owen, p. 64, 69, 70.)

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4. Becauſe unwarranted ways of worſhip were practiſed among us. p. 66. (Ex. p. 72, 102, &c.)

5. Becauſe goſpel diſcipline was neglected and changed into a worldly dominion. p. 67. (Ex. p. 20, 28—31, 51. Dr. Owen upon it. p. 85—87.)

6. Becauſe of miniſter's ſetting up themſelves, and inſtead of preaching to edification, treating thoſe who would not ſubmit to them with a great deal of abuſe. p. 67, &c. (Ex. p. 35, 84, 90, 91, 94.)

An addreſs to Mr. *Joſeph Fiſh*,—giving the reaſons for my writing, p. 79. And ſhewing to him that he has in his arguments to ſupport the ſtanding churches, been guilty,

1. Of ſetting *themſelves* up as a ſtandard inſtead of divine truth, p. 83.

2. Of uſing ſcripture words without duly regarding their meaning, p. 87.

3. Of blending truth and error together in many inſtances, in order to gain his argument, p. 91.

4. Of violating the golden rule ſo much as to endeavor to draw their own character only by their virtues or good pretences; and that of their opponents only by their imperfections, p. 99.

Our fathers like conduct will condemn, and not excuſe him herein, p. 101.

Mr. *Fiſh* in theſe proceedings has groſsly miſrepreſented ſeveral facts, p. 116.

And has ſhewn a wrong temper: ſo that according to his own conceſſions he is guilty both of ſophiſtry and ſlander, p. 126.

APPENDIX, ſhewing that the advocates for infant-baptiſm proceed in an obſcure and unſteady uſe of words, which carries them away into additions to God's word, and a denial of what is therein; alſo to abuſe their neighbours, and countenance popery, Arminianiſm and Antinomianiſm.

HAVING

HAVING thus ſummed up the matter in ſhort terms, the author has one earneſt requeſt to make to all his readers; and that is, That they would always be careful to diſtinguiſh between the characters of men and the truth of God. He deſires to be far from ſetting himſelf up in compariſon, much leſs in competition, with many great and good men, who have practiſed infant baptiſm, and other things which he oppoſes. If thoſe practices cannot be vindicated from divine truth, the characters of men can't do it, but only ſerve to perplex and keep ſouls in bondage. The goodneſs of David's character could never make that proceeding of his to be right, which he was moved to by *ſatan*; neither could the badneſs of Joab's character, make it wrong for him to look upon that conduct to be *abominable*. 1 Chron. 21. 1, 6. *Diſſimulation* was no better in Peter than it was in Judas; therefore Paul called it by it's proper name, to prevent others being enſnared thereby. Gal. 2. 13. Yet as one or two actions do not ordinarily form a man's character, David is far from having the character of ſatan's ſervant, or Peter from having that of a hypocrite or a traitor. So let all take notice, that what I mean to appear againſt, is the particular evils that I have named, and not againſt the characters, or any of the virtues of thoſe who have been enſnared by them. Hence there is no need for any to take pains to prove that learned men, or good men have held thoſe things; for that is not diſputed. The turning points of our whole diſpute may be reduced to theſe four queſtions.

1. Whether

1. Whether Abraham's believing, and being juſtified by the *covenant of grace in Chriſt before* he took the *bond-woman*, can give us warrant to confound that *grace* with the covenant of circumciſion (which included the children both of the *bond-woman* and the *free*) ſo as to bring the children of our *fleſh* to baptiſm, before we have any goſpel evidence that they are *made free in Jeſus Chriſt?* Gal. 3. 17, and 4. 22—31.

2. Since the chief advantage that the Jews had by the covenant of circumciſion was, that unto them were committed the *oracles of God*; which were ſo much limited to them, that before Chriſt by his death had taken that covenant out of the way, his apoſtles might not preach to any but to them who were in it. Rom. 3. 2. Mat. 10. 5. 6. Is it not an abſolute falſhood, for any to aſſert, that the covenant is the ſame with our children, as it was with theirs? and ſince our children have the means for converſion uſed with them, in ſo much clearer light, than theirs had under the law; what an abuſe is it to accuſe us with leſſening our children's privileges, only becauſe we dare not put the outward ſign of regeneration upon them, before we have evidence that the inward change is wrought?

3. Though the primitive churches employed elders in ordaining others over them, which doubtleſs is an example for us to follow; yet how can that prove, that the conferring of office-power is inherent in officers, and not in the church as a body, ſince Chriſt expreſsly warned his diſciples, againſt having any ſuch ſuperiority among them as there is in civil ſtates, ſaying, *He that*

is greateſt among you let him be as the younger: and the apoſtles were but the churches *ſervants for Jeſus ſake?* Luke. 22. 26. 2 Cor. 4. 5.

4. Since in the Jewiſh church, where a certain part or proportion of the peoples income was by expreſs command to be given to the miniſters of the ſanctuary, while yet neither precept nor precedent can be found for rulers uſing any *force* to collect it; what warrant can any earthly power have now, to aſſeſs any perſons, and uſe force to collect the ſame, for the ſupport of any religious worſhip whatſoever?*

If

* The reader will not wonder that ſuch care is taken to have this queſtion truly ſtated, when he is informed, that ſince theſe ſheets were in the preſs, the author has ſeen a diſcourſe that bears ſo fine a title as this; "Catholicity; "or, chriſtian charity," publiſhed at the particular requeſt of a *convention* of thoſe called ſtanding miniſters at Briſtol, on *May* 20, 1772, in which the writer mentions our ſeparation, which he calls a ſect well known, and ſays, "it is "worthy of notice, that many of the leaders of that unhappy ſchiſm, who were for pulling down miniſters, and "ping up churches in their great zeal (rather fury) for "poſed hereſy, particularly in the article of giving and "ceiving miniſterial ſupport; I ſay many of thoſe "perſons are as fond of ſupport from their people, as "they once anathematized. The conſiſtency and honeſty "of ſuch a temper and conduct is far beyond me to re-"cile, and is, I apprehend, as irreconcilable as light and "darkneſs." p. 38. Thus their charity prompts them to repreſent us, as not only inconſiſtent, but alſo *diſhoneſt*; and the way they take to do it, is by inſinuating that our controverſy with them was about *giving* and *receiving*; whereas the truth is, it was about *aſſeſſing* and *forcing*; and they are welcome to produce one inſtance if they can of any ſuch inconſiſtency and diſhoneſty as they here ſpeak of, unleſs it be in two or three teachers who have deſerted the cauſe

ry.

If any can fairly anſwer theſe queſtions; or can ſhew that this is not the true ſtate of our controverſy, they will do ſomething to the purpoſe: but to neglect this and fill up volume after volume with other things, evidently tends to confuſion and not to peace. And if any with Abner, chuſe now to call it *play*; they like him, will ſurely find it to be *bitterneſs in the latter end.* 2 Sam. 2. 14, 26.

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they once profeſſed to be in, in order to get into fellowſhip with theſe miniſters. And ſince they have given this pamphlet the name of *charity*, I would juſt remark that they ſay, "There is doubtleſs a ſort of natural, as well as chriſtian "charity. The ſource of this kind of charity is ſelf; here "it begins and ends." p. 25. and they ſay, "Liberty and "candor are the great baſis of human happineſs: we often "hear perſons extolling the advantages of both, who yet "ſeem to be really acquainted with neither. For if they "have any deſign on foot, if you entertain different views, "and with freedom ſpeak your mind, you are inſtantly "deemed an enemy, and you muſt be treated as ſuch, ſo "that if you eſcape without the ſword, it is not ſo much "owing to a generous ſpirit of liberty, as a want of power." p. 65.

Now the reader may form ſome judgment of what ſort of perſons they are, who extol liberty, charity and a catholic temper, while their own charity begins and ends in *ſelf*, by the two following notes. Speaking of our ſeparation the writer ſays, "Such uncharitable principles have led them "to exclude themſelves from the communion of THE ca-"tholic church." p. 38. And ſpeaking of occaſionally inviting miniſters to preach he ſays, "I cannot ſee the pro-"priety nor the expediency of inviting the aſſiſtance of ANY-"man, be his profeſſion what it may, that denies ME the "rights and privileges of the church of Chriſt. If we cant "eat and drink of one bread and one cup, in token of mu-"tual fellowſhip; I ſee no reaſon why I ſhould encourage "ſuch perſons in their *uncharitableneſs*, ſince charity is the "great criterion of real chriſtianity." p. 66.

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